

The page features a decorative design with three blue, 3D-rendered circles of varying sizes. Two smaller circles are positioned in the upper right quadrant, and a significantly larger circle is in the lower right quadrant. Thin blue lines extend from the top left and top right corners towards the circles, creating a sense of depth and framing.

Transcript of Lectures by Syaikh Hamza Yusuf

**Compiled by the Merciful Servant
12/28/2014**

Table of Content

What happened to poetry?.....	3
Vision of Islam.....	14
TV Truth and Technomania.....	157
The Alchemy of Happiness.....	162
Sufism in Islam.....	266
Success in this world and the next.....	271
Spring gift – poem by SYH.....	292
San Jose Mercury News: Article on Terrorism.....	296
Rethinking Reform.....	301
Religion and Foreign Policy Conference Call.....	334
Muslims Living in Non-Muslim Lands.....	346
Men and Women.....	362
Love even those that revile you.....	365
Lambs to the slaughter with Muhammad Shareef.....	374
Islam Post-September 11: ask Hamza Yusuf.....	409
Interview with SHY after Hajj.....	421
Interview on education, inner city, empowerment.....	431
How the Qur’an was compiled.....	435
Guardian article: if you hate the west, move to a Muslim country.....	437
Frontline interview.....	442
Foundations of the Sufi path.....	449
Fatwa on following a mahzab.....	454
Families and individuals.....	462
Etiquettes of disagreement.....	474
Doha debates.....	484

Description of the Prophet SAW.....	516
Da'wah: how to speak to people of other faiths.....	535
Conveying Islam at Oxford.....	550
Changing the tide.....	562
Between ignorance and extremism.....	567
Be peacemakers – Eid 2010.....	572
BBC: The Prophet's Birthday.....	574
Alchemy of Happiness (short).....	581
A Time for Introspection.....	639
17 Benefits of Tribulation.....	642

Transcript for What Happened to Poetry?¹

Transcript Details

Event Name: What Happened to Poetry?

Transcript Author: Islamic Transcripts

Description: http://www.islamictranscripts.net/transcripts/hamza_yusuf_What%20%20Happened%20to%20Poetry.pdf

Date Transcribed: 1/1/2011 12:00:00 AM

Original

URL: http://www.islamictranscripts.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=68:hamzayusufpoetry&catid=44:transcriptsothers&Itemid=66

The Spiritual Rumi Conference, Fremont CA

In the name of Allah, The Merciful, The Compassionate.

I want to start off by saying that I know next to nothing about Jalaluddin ul Rumi, so I'm not going to talk about Maulana Rumi. I've read his poetry in translation, and the *Mathnawi* several years ago from Nicholson's translation but what I wanted to talk about was words, and in particular about poetry, which I do know a little bit about. And the reason for that is two-fold: one, in terms of the English language, I don't know anybody that knows English poetry better than my father does. He was somebody who, as far as I can tell, had a religious experience at Columbia University taking classes with a man called Mark Van Doren[i] who was also one of the teachers of John Berryman[ii], who some of you might know, who was an expert on Shakespeare.

Van Doren was a teacher of literature. He taught the great literature of Western civilization and my father sat in his classes for three years at Columbia University, and then audited his classes after he'd finished all the courses that he could take with him. And I don't think he ever said anything in any of his classes but he, he told me many stories and actually he named me after Mark Van Doren, so that tells you – I was his first born son – and I think that tells you the impact that this man had on his life. But one of the things that he said about Van Doren that struck him, as to his teaching technique, he said unlike the other professors at Columbia University, who would always look at the masters with their critical eyes, Van Doren was in awe of these great teachers and poets and writers of Western civilization and he said that he had a deep humility in

¹ All transcripts in this file are taken from <http://sheikhhamza.com/list-transcripts/>. The aim of this e-book is only to improve the accessibility and convenience of accessing the lectures.

their presence. And he said that the other thing, and Robert Giroux[iii] – some of you might know also, who was also a student of Van Doren's – he said Van Doren had a very clever technique in his class, and that was that he would pretend that you were his intellectual peer or equal. And when I mentioned that to my father, he said it's not true. He didn't pretend, he actually really believed that. And that's what was powerful about his teaching.

So, my father actually wrote a commentary on an Elizabethan treatise on verse and so I grew up hearing – he memorized a lot of poetry – I grew up hearing poetry, and also just hearing his discussions about these things, but I didn't appreciate any of it until I had a great teacher. And that occurred in the Middle East, and he was from West Africa. And so it was very strange that this American young man from the West Coast, who had a father who was immersed in great literature and he's one of the only people that I know, he actually read the 37 plays of Shakespeare every year, like the Muslims do a *khatam*, and every time he would finish, he would start over again. But I learned to appreciate poetry hearing West Africans listen to poetry, recite poetry and be moved by poetry. And particularly, their expressions when they heard a line, and this is called *tarab*. The Arabs call it *tarab* and we get the word *troubadour* from that Arabic word. The *troubadour* is the one that makes you delight in what he has to say or tell, his story, and the Arabs, if they're moved by poetry, they're moved with this *tarab*. And the way the Mauritians, they're very expressive because they're literally – it's almost like you stab them. When they hear a really good line of poetry, they'll say “*Argh*” like that, literally, just like that. And they'll make a move when they hear it, “*Argh*”. They'll literally make a move. [*makes a stabbing motion at his heart*] And initially, I thought that this was kind of an affected type of thing, but after awhile I realized that it wasn't. It was that they really were being moved by the poetry. And that, obviously, got me more and more interested in poetry. And it forced me, when I came back to the States, to go back to my own tradition. So it's funny – and by my own tradition, I mean the civilization which I grew up in, which has a tradition of great poetry.

And one of the things about poetry, and I really believe that one of the reasons that poetry is no longer taught, and if you've ever had a teacher that taught you poetry in any real way, that would have been probably the most profound class or experience that you had. But very few people are afforded that extraordinary delight of having a great teacher. Most of us have to suffer the mediocrity of passionless people teach words the emanated from the hearts of deeply passionate people. Because what poetry is about is passion, and what's forbidden in the modern world is passion. It's actually forbidden. You can't be passionate about anything. And woe unto you, if you're passionate! And if you think what's out there mimicking passion has anything to do with real passion, then you've been completely deluded. Really, completely deluded. And if you think that any of these politicians that seem to be passionate about what they're talking about – that is one of the greatest examples of the lie and the mimicry of what passion is about.

One of the reasons that they don't teach poets anymore is because poets aren't melodramatic. And in a world that you want people to think in melodramatic terms, you don't want them to understand the subtleties of the poet. And I'll just give you an example from Western tradition. In Homer's *The Iliad*, you never know whether Homer the Greek is on the side of the Greeks or the Trojans. You don't know who's more noble, the Greeks or the Trojans. And he's telling you something about most wars that are fought between people. If you look at the wars that were fought between the Muslims and the non-Muslims in that first part of Islam, the greatest warriors of the Quraysh, men like Khalid ibn al-Walid^[iv], who fought against the Prophet in so many battles, end up becoming one of the greatest warriors of Islam. Because it's not about this battle between black and white. It's about the living coming from the dead, and the dead coming from the living. In Homer's *Iliad*, he has Achilles, when his beloved is killed by Hector, and Achilles has a few flaws and one of them is wrath – he gets angry very easily and he's petulant. What Achilles does is he goes and he kills Hector, and then he drags him around the tomb of his friend, and then he leaves his body to be eaten by the dogs, which was a sacrilege to the Greeks and the Trojans, something terrible – no respect for the dead. And one of the things that Apollo says in a gathering – and Apollo was opposed to Achilles, he was on the side of the Trojans – Apollo says, “Woe unto Achilles! Lest we become angry at him, and he is a good man.” And what that tells you is that when you look at your enemy, you have to be willing to admit that even your enemy has redeeming qualities. Because if you're not willing to admit that, then you're stuck in this mannequin duality of black versus white. And this is the melodrama of the modern world: *They're evil, therefore we're good*. And the problem with that world view, like an American poet who was more noted for her doggerels than for her poetry, but I still like her, she's Ella Wheeler Wilcox. She used to write a poem every day for one of the newspapers in the 1880s. She said that the world's divided into two people. And it's been said that the world is indeed divided into two people – one group are the group that divide the world into two people, and the other group is all the rest. So she said that the world is divided into two people, and she said – and I'm not talking about the good and bad because the good are half bad and the bad are half good. That's the human condition.

So that's one of the things that poets teach that they don't want taught anymore because it makes people have to actually think, and thinking is problematic in a society where you don't want people to think. So what happened to poetry? That's a good question, what happened to English poetry? One of the things about the modern world is that they tell us that anybody can write poetry. This is what you'll learn in a creative writing class. That's the biggest lie anybody ever told you. You can just sit down and put down your thoughts and call that poetry. It's not poetry. Because this is another lie that this culture wants to teach – it's that hard things come easy. Fast food. Just go to Macdonald's. You can be satiated. And if you think *that* food satiates you, listen to your body after a few years of eating it. As the heart begins to harden, literally and figuratively. It's not just the literal hardening of the arteries, arteriosclerosis, it's a spiritual

hardening of the heart, eating food that has no blessing. Eating food that wasn't made with the hands of a loving person who actually cares for the people he or she is feeding. Food sacrificed to the altar of God. There used to be something in this country they called *soul food*, right? Soul food. That was the food that your mother cooked with love because it actually nourished your soul. It wasn't hamburgers made with beef that are fed other animals that give them diseases like mad cow's disease. It's not Old Macdonald's Farm anymore, right? What happened to Old Macdonald? He became Macdonald's and that's part of the problem. Really.

So this..what happened to poetry? Well, I'll tell you what happened to poetry. The Qur'an has a chapter called The Poets. *Al Shu'ara*. And there's no chapter in The Qur'an that isn't named after something that is great. You will not find any chapter in The Qur'an that is not named after something that has immense import. Whether it's The Spider, whether it's The Cow, whether it's The Bee, whether it's The Morning Sunlight, whether it's The Moon, whether it's The Moving Sand-dunes, whether it's Mutual Consultation, every word that is used as a title for one of the chapters of The Qur'an has immense import in the lives of human beings. And one of them is The Poets. But The Qur'an divides the poets into two types of people – the poets who sell the gift that they have been given for the highest bidder. And this was the *jahili* poet, he was called the *sha-il*. And what he would do is, if you paid him enough money, he would say whatever you wanted to say with him, and when I mentioned that to my father, about that, in The Qur'an, he said, "It reminds me of Simonides that Aristotle mentioned". He was a poet, a Greek poet, that used to sell his ability to do verse to the highest bidder. And somebody once came to him and asked him to write a poem about a donkey that he had particular love for. And it bothered Simonides that he would have to write a poem about a donkey. But because the man was paying him enough money, he wrote the poem and Socrates quoted a couple of lines from it, "How beautiful thou art, thou storm-footed ass".

So that's one type of poet. And whether you realize it or not, he is now disguised as an ad man. And The Qur'an says about these people, "The poets, they follow them, those who are astray. Haven't you seen them wandering in every valley, saying with their mouths what they don't do?" So I want to give you a couple of examples of that. All I did, opened up a magazine today, didn't even have to look very far, just opened it up.

[shows ad] First ad:

Godiva chocolate will make her heart skip a beat. If she wins the ring, you may need to know CPR. To be or not to be, that is the question.

Godiva chocolate will make her heart skip a beat. If she wins the ring, you may need to know CPR.

[puts ad aside]

[shows second ad]

Next one:

One part protection, one part complexion. Whose words these are, I think I know. Whose house is in the village, though? One part protection, one part complexion. Estratab, estrastep. Your pill for more reasons than one.

[shows third ad]

Make your bones rock hard. Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow. Creeps in this petty pace of time from day to day. Make your bones rock hard.

[puts aside]

“Plop plop, fizz fizz. Oh, what a relief it is.”

The ancients would never do that! Even Simonides would not stoop that low. And that’s the problem with our modern world. They don’t know what words are. They don’t know the power of words, they don’t know who gave Man words. They don’t know where they gave from.

Elizabeth Browning did. She gave one of the best descriptions of Jalaluddin Rumi. She wasn’t talking about Rumi, but she was talking about a poet. *He bore by day, he bore by night, the pressure of God’s infinite on his finite soul.* I mean, that’s the poet. *One part protection, one part complexion. Chiquita Banana. I’m Chiquita Banana and I’m here to say, a banana’s gotta ripe in a particular way.*

The Qur’an says about language: *Arrahman alam Al Quran, khalaqal insan, alamuhul bayyan.* The Merciful, who has taught The Qur’an, created the human being and taught the human being how to articulate his needs, how to speak what was in his heart. Speak what was in his heart. *Allamuhul bayyan.* The word in Arabic, to speak what’s in your heart, is *yu’ribu*. In fact, that’s what an Arab was, and that’s why Herodotus said, of all people, the Arabs hated the lie more than anything else. Herodotus said about the Arabs, “Of all people, the Arabs hated the lie more than any other people.” Because they knew what words were. Words are meant to speak the truth. That’s what words are for, and that’s what the other type of poet does – he speaks the truth. And that’s a very difficult thing in the modern world, because like Mark Twain said, only dead men can speak the truth.

Now, I want to just take a liar as an example here. This is a book called *Why I Am Not A Muslim*. His name’s Ibn Warraq and it’s interesting, he says *Acknowledgements* and the first thing he acknowledges, “I am not a scholar or a specialist.” Well then, what are you doing writing a book about Islam? I mean, that’s an interesting question to ask somebody who’s writing a book about Islam. But he says here that there are three types of Islam: Islam 1 was what the Prophet taught. Islam 2: what is expounded in the religion, interpreted and developed by theologians through traditions. It includes *shari’ah* and Islam law. And Islam 3, what Muslims actually did do and achieve, that is to say, Islamic civilization.

My general thesis emerges in this book is that Islam 3, i.e., Islamic civilization, often reached magnificent heights despite Islam 1 and 2.

And here's the example he gives. In the *Mishkat* of the Prophet Muhammad – and this is revealing his ignorance because even though it's in the *Mishkat*, the *hadith* is from *Sahih Bukhari* and *Muslim* and it's *mutafa qalai*, which means it's agreed upon and it has one of the highest authorities in Islam. The Prophet Muhammad is made to say, "A belly full of purulent matter is better than a belly full of poetry". That's the *hadith*, it's actually a true *hadith*.

"Had the poets adhered to Islam 1 and 2, we certainly would not have had the poems of Abu Nuwas[v] singing the praises of wine and the beautiful buttocks of young boys."

I mean, this is a very odd things for Ibn Warraq to be happy about – that poems about the buttocks of beautiful young boys was preserved for posterity, because the *hadith* wasn't followed. In this culture, they call it pedophilia, I think, if you write poems about young boys' buttocks, but that's for the FBI to deal with in Operation Candyman[vi]. Maybe Abu Nuwas would have been part of that sting operation.

The interesting thing about that *hadith* is, what the Prophet was talking about is these type characters – *one part protection, one part complexion*. And most of you, unfortunately, have enough of these types of lines and many of you don't even know that they're actually in metered verse. And if you go through a lot of these so-called – I mean, this is just lousy, it's not very well done. *We're changing the face of security, protecting people, preserving privacy*. I mean, that's the poets that – it's better that you had your belly filled with puss than if you fill it with empty words. Right? And if you just look – because the world is filled with poetry and people love poetry, and that's why pop songs are filling the air waves. It's because people actually love to hear metered words, they love to hear lyric verse. And so people listen to this music, and they don't think about what their minds are being filled with. They don't think about – we worry about pollution of the environment, but people don't worry about pollution of the mind, about what actually goes into your ears and enters into your heart, because The Qur'an says,

Your ears, your eyes, your heart, these you have been made responsible for.

You're actually responsible to protect your heart so that your soul doesn't die. Because one of the ways the soul is killed is by allowing things into the soul that poison the soul. And one of the most powerful and toxic elements is words that are not true. False words. And this is the poetry that the Prophet *saw* was warning about. His wife Aisha memorized 12,000 lines of poetry from the poet Labid alone. 12,000 lines. The Prophet *saw* was once riding on a camel and he asked to hear some lines of one of the *jahaliyya* poets who was a pre-Islamic poet whose poetry was filled with wisdom. And the narrator says, "I mentioned a line and the Prophet said "Hee. Let's hear some more." And I mentioned some more and he said, "Hee hee. Let's hear some more" until I mentioned a hundred lines of poetry." The Prophet *saw* used to have poets in his gatherings. His

own Hassan ibn Thabit[vii], who was one of the great poets of that time, he said, “This man’s poetry is strengthened by the Holy Spirit.” One time a man al-Aqra ibn Habis[viii] came to him, and he was from Bani Tameem, who’s a nasty tribe, and he called from behind the Prophet’s house, he said “O Muhammad! (saw) You better come out! Because I’m a poet and my praise is good and my blame is bad.” And the Prophet *saw* said, “That’s God”. It’s not you, that’s God. The one whose praise is good and whose blame is bad, that’s God. So he said “Come out! Because we want to have a” – the Arabs had these kind of poetic combat, where they would have one poet of one tribe get up and oppose a poet of another tribe and this was a civilized way of fighting. And sometimes it led to uncivilized ways of fighting. Because words meant something to those people. And that’s part of the problem of modern peoples – words don’t mean anything anymore. You can say anything, and you know – Dennis Miller[ix]. I mean, these are the types of people who can get out there and just say anything.

And part of this culture is that we’ve become such a shameless culture. And one of the things about shamelessness, is that the root of shamelessness is shame. And if you want that insight, you have to go to the great Russian poet. And he is a poet, even though he wrote in prose. Dostoyevsky. Because in his *Brothers Karamazov*, if anybody who’s read that remembers the meeting with the priest, who is the mystic – and the father, he’s a debauchee, he’s always having orgies in his houses and he’s a terrible man and he always behaves like a buffoon – shameless. And he’s in the presence of this mystic, Father Zosima, and he begins to act like a buffoon and Ilyusha, who’s trying to perfect his soul, is mortified and his other son Ivan is mortified, and there’s a point where he says, “I’m so ashamed at behaving like this”. And the priest says to him, “Don’t be ashamed because that’s the root of the problem.” In other words, that’s why you’re so shameless. It’s because you’re so filled with shame. And that’s what’s happened in this culture. This culture, we’ve become such a shameless culture that we have to be shameless in order to deal with the pain of being so shameless. And that’s something very difficult for us.

So those are the poets that the Prophet *saw* warned about, not poets who had truth to say. So I want to look just at a few things, and then I’ll stop because it’s been a long night. One of the things that Borges, who’s extraordinary – he wrote a wonderful story about a meeting between Ibn Rush (Averroes) and several other intellectuals. It’s a beautiful story. It’s a fictionalized account of something that could have happened. And the beauty of the story for me, was that what Borges was trying to do was trying to give us a glimpse of the exalted level of conversation that the people of Andalusia had. And they’re discussing a line of poetry that comes out of the Mu’allaqat, which is the, these are the great odes that the Arabs hung in the Kaabah before Islam and they considered them to be testimony to the greatness of the Arabic language. And they were, they were great, but many of them were filled with meanings that Islam would radically transform. But they talk about this line of poetry in which the poet says, Zuhair says

I saw death like the stumbling of a camel. The one that it hits, it destroys, and the one that it misses lives a long life and grows old.

And they begin to argue about this line of poetry, and they say it's a bad line because fate is not like the stumbling of a camel. Fate is determined by God. And Ibn Rushd or Averroes in the story says, "No you're wrong. Because what the poet describes, is he describes something we can all relate to and that's what makes poetry great, it's that the poet speaks in a universal language." And this is why Aristotle – and Averroes is the greatest commentator of Aristotle – and so Borges knew that, and Borges knew Aristotle very well. What Aristotle says is that poetry is greater than history, because history deals with particulars but poetry deals with the universal. And that is why, when the poet speaks, the poet impacts our hearts if he speaks the truth. Because we recognize that truth in our hearts. And what Ibn Rushd says in this story, is that the poet, when he – what he says is he says fate is not like a stumbling camel, but he says, *I see it* like that. *Ra'aytu*. That's what's he's describing. And what he's saying is that often, when we look at the world, we see chaos. It doesn't mean that it's chaotic, but we often see only chaos. And that is what the poet is saying. He's describing something that human beings experience. And that's why, when we look at the world today, when we look at human beings, we can often forget that there is an order in this universe.

When we look at Palestine right now and look at the madness that's taking place there in Palestine, it's a meeting of two worlds. That's all Palestine is. If you want to understand Palestine, all you have to understand is that half of this planet, *half* of this planet, lives on less than \$2 a day. And we in the West consume 60% of the world's resources even though we are less than 10% the inhabitants of the planet. And where do those two civilizations meet? They meet in Palestine. Because Palestine is taking people from the West and planting them in the midst of a society that has been too long exploited, and had its resources expropriated, lived under despotism largely due to post-colonial traumatic syndrome. And most people are too busy watching the important messages from our sponsors, to actually read a book about the history of the Middle East, about colonialism. I mean, just read David Fromkin's *A Peace to End All Peace*. Most of the people are too busy to realize that most of what's going on in the West that's troubling us is what they call "blowback". In CIA parlance, "blowback", the unsuspected consequences or unforeseen consequences of our own covert activities. That's all there is. But people don't want that, that's troublesome. We want to be in melodrama, remember? Us versus them. Good versus evil. The evil empire. The Axis of Evil. These wonderful terms that make life so easy. There's all bad, remember? And we're all good, thank God. Makes it very easy, instead of having to deal with these ambiguities, which is what the poets are trying to tell us. We've got problems. You have to think a little bit deeper.

So that's what the poet has. He has a universal message. And that's what Rumi had, and I think that's why Rumi.. Rumi strikes me as being popular for 2 reasons. One, he's calling our bluff because everybody knows in our heart of hearts that they're going to die. And all he is is somebody who's in the moment, recognizing that death is imminent and the only important thing is the readiness. And that's something another great poet from the West said. If you look at the play *Hamlet*, which really is a play about spiritual evolution – a lot of people don't read Shakespeare like that, but Shakespeare actually was working within deeply spiritual motifs. And I'm just going to use 2 examples, and then I'm done.

One of them is the idea of purifying the soul. And Hamlet, if you remember in the great soliloquy, when he says "To be or not to be", what's it about? It's about fear of death. That's what it's all about, it's about fear of death. Because that's part of Hamlet's dilemma, it's this fear of his own mortality. But by the end of the play, what's happened to the man? He's had a complete transformation, and when he's about to go into this duel, Horatio – they're talking, and he hints to Horatio that even though he feels he's going to win the duel, he has this sense of his own death. And Horatio's worried about it, and he says, well, stop it for another time. And what does Hamlet say? He says:

Not a wit. We defy augury.

Don't stop it, we're going to defy augury, in other words, having a bad omen. And this is something the Prophet Muhammad *saw* taught. He said, if you have a bad omen, do the thing anyway. Go against that thing in your soul. And then he (Hamlet) says:

There's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow.

In other words, even God is aware of the fall of a sparrow. And there's a providence in that fall.

If it be now, tis not to come

If it be not to come, it will be now.

If it be not now, yet it will come.

He's talking about death. It's nothing you can stop. If it's not meant to be now, it's coming later.

If it's coming later, it's not meant to come now. And then he says, *The readiness is all.*

That's what life is about. It's not trying to put off death. It's being ready for death.

Since no man has aught of what he leaves, what is 't to leave betimes? Let be.

If you can't take anything with you, then why are you so worried about living this long life? Because once death comes – and this is said by many many great people before him and after him – Marcus Aurelius was one of them.

And finally, my favourite sonnet. And I'm sorry if you came to hear Rumi, I'm quoting Shakespeare. *[laughs]* They call Shakespeare the Rumi – no, they call Rumi the Shakespeare of

the East, which is..that's, that's not..Shakespeare is Shakespeare, Rumi is Rumi. So, don't try to compare them. But this is a great sonnet, it's actually my favourite, but everybody's..my father says his favourite's the one he happens to be reading at the time, so..

*The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action; and till action, lust
Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust;
Enjoy'd no sooner but despised straight;
Past reason hunted; and no sooner had,
Past reason hated, as a swallowed bait,
On purpose laid to make the taker mad:
Mad in pursuit, and in possession so;
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme;
A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe;
Before, a joy proposed; behind, a dream.
All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.*

And that is a commentary on a *hadith*, that hell is surrounded by pleasurable things and heaven is surrounded by displeasurable things. That's all he's saying, is that you look at the enticements of this world, and you go after them without any thinking, and as soon as you've got them, you realise the bitterness of their reality. They didn't get you what you wanted. And he says, we all know it, because we've done it again and again and again, and yet we don't know to shun the heaven that leads to hell. In other words, these temporary pleasures that end up leading us to something that's frightening and this is one of the truths that the poet said, and the Prophet *saw* said, "Surely, in poetry is great wisdom". Ibn Hajar r.a. says, "A true word that is in accordance with the truth". And the Prophet Muhammad *saw* said, "The truest thing that a poet every said was what Labid said, 'Isn't it that everything other than God is falsehood?'" And that's in *Sahihh Bukhari*. And that's all Rumi ever said. You can read all those lines – words, words, words – that's all his message is. It's just a commentary on that one statement of the Prophet Muhammad *saw*. Everything other than God is false, and if you realise that at the intellectual level, he and every other scholar of Islam has been calling us to realise it at an experiential level. And that's the path of submission to Allah *swt*, which in Arabic is called Al-Islam – submission to God.

And I'm going to finish with – aha I tricked you – I'm going to finish with a poem by Jalaludin Rumi, which is translated by Coleman Barks - I like Coleman a lot, but my friend Muhammad Isa Weli said "*His translations are too roomy for me*" – R-O-O.

This is called "One Who Wraps Himself" and it's a commentary on a chapter in the Qur'an, *Muzzammil*.

*God called the Prophet Muhammad Muzzammil,
"The One Who Wraps Himself,"
and said,
"Come out from under your cloak, you so fond
Of concealment and fleeing*

Because the Prophet *saw* loved to go off to the cave and meditate. And so he's being told now to come back.

*Don't cover your face.
The world is a reeling, drunken body, and you
are its intelligent head.
Don't hide the candle
of your clarity. Stand up and burn
through the night, my prince.*

*Without your light
a great lion is held captive by a rabbit!*

That's what Odysseus in one of Shakespeare's plays says to the Greeks. *It is by our weakness that Troy stands, not by their strength.* And that's the reality. It's by the weakness of the people of truth that the people of falsehood stand. Not by their strength, because falsehood has no strength. But when the people of truth are weak, then a rabbit can hold a lion captive.

Alhamdulillah. I thank my teachers for instilling in me a love of poetry that my father tried to instill in me. And I thank all of you for bearing with me tonight, and being very patient and polite.

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/what-happened-to-poetry#sthash.2omkjVHm.dpuf>

Transcript for Vision of Islam

Event Name: Vision of Islam

Transcript Author: A Sister transcribed it, and sent it to the site

Description:

Date Transcribed: 1/1/2000 12:00:00 AM

Original URL:

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

Chapter 1

I am going to follow this book which is written by Murata and Chittick called the Vision of Islam quite closely. I would appreciate if people read the sections for this week. Preface, Introduction up through Islam so that will be 34 pages. I have taught this book once before to a group of non Muslim teachers and I personally think it is the best thing in English that I have seen as a basic introduction. It is actually not that basic because it is actually quite a deep exploration of the tradition of Islam. In just re-reading this section, I have read it a few times, I was remembering why I liked the book so much. It is useful for Muslims not just non Muslims. What I appreciate about the book is that there are two ways religion is looked at in the West. They call them in vocabulary a religious tradition, in universities narrative approach and descriptive approach. A descriptive approach is the most common approach, it is the anthropological approach, it is the approach that looks at how a religion manifests itself in a society, how people behave, how they express their religion, their practices. This will include folk practices as well as practices instituted by the religion. It will also bring up some very bizarre things because human beings do some very strange things and they will often do them in the name of religion and so that will be seen as part of the religion.

From the perspective of a scholar of the religion and I mean devotional scholar because in the West they differentiate between devotional scholars, between scholars, what Dr Cleary calls “scholars for dollars”. Those are people who earn their living in institutions so they will study something as a way of making their living whether they believe in it or not. So many people will teach religion that do not believe in religion. That perspective of religion will taint the way they teach their religion.

I went through a religious studies program at California University. There was an incredible difference for me between the classes that I took with somebody who was working within a tradition and was a believer in a tradition. He was a devout Catholic with a deep interest in Zen Buddhism. The classes that were done by people that did not believe in religion, that type of approach that is taken by someone who does not believe in religion even if they are attempting to be objective, it will still taint their view of religion and that is the nature of human beings. We look at everything through filters and anybody that look at Islam will look at it through filters. Now Muslims will look at their religion invariably defensively because they believe it or not whether they really understand the religious tradition or not. There are some Muslims out there that I think if they found out what their religion said, they might even leave their religion, because it is inconsistent with their view of the world. There are other Muslims and I think it is the vast majority of them that it will only strengthen their conviction in their religion the more they got to know their religion. There are some non Muslims if they studied Islam they would convert to Islam. There are other ones, it will actually increase their belligerence towards Islam. Then there are other ones that they might not convert but they will have a deep respect for the tradition. So everybody brings filters to whatever they look at and they admit that in the introduction to the book so what I want to do is look here a little bit at the preface and then go into the introduction.

One of the things that they explain they are attempting to do is to explain Islam to Muslims who as a general rule know nothing about their religion but are defensive and that is very true. Most Muslims do not know anything about their religion in any deep sense of the word. If you actually ask them to tell you about things you would be surprised at how ignorant many Muslims are. Then to Westerners who know nothing but are instinctively hostile so you are dealing in an environment. One of the things that Dr Cleary says in his book "Zen Cohens". "An American who believes in himself or herself to be liberal, open minded, unprejudiced will display the most extreme prejudices if asked about Islam a religion that he probably knows absolutely nothing about". But immediately will begin to voice options about which if he voiced them about something else he would feel he was prejudiced, that it would be unfair to do that. So it is very interesting the hostility that a lot of people have. There are many reasons for that hostility. There are historical reasons for that hostility. Islam for centuries was the most powerful force in a large part of the world. For that reason, other peoples either lived reasonably harmoniously with the Muslims or instance the Chinese. The Chinese traditionally had very good trading routes with the Muslims. You know that China is bordered by several Muslim countries and that a large segment of China became Muslim. There is indication that the Chinese actually very early on were introduced to Islam. Within the Chinese tradition, in one of the books, written by a Chinese scholar, they say actually that a delegation of Chinese were sent to Madinah to meet with the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and another delegation met with Umar ibn Al Khattab. So

the Chinese early on became exposed to Islam and had actually quite good relations with the Muslims. There were battles, in fact early on in the 8th century when some of the Chinese paper makers were captured in a battle, they were taken to Baghdad and they taught the Muslims how to make paper because paper was invented in the last century AD by a Chinese man Siloun who is considered one of the most important figures of history because of that invention. So the Muslims generally had good relations with the Africans. Many of the African people became Muslim. In black Africa, black Africans were taken as slaves so there was often some antagonism definitely between the southern black Africans. Many of them became Muslim. Antagonism continued on in West Africa because of the slave trading that went on. Often they were black African Muslims but they would go down into places like the Ebo land in Nigeria or the Euroba. Many of the Euroba became Muslim but there was antagonism so in some areas you had good relationships based on trading and in other areas you had problems.

The West generally has had an antagonistic relationship with Islam. Initially that is not always the case and there are extraordinary cases of cultural flourishings that occurred certainly during periods of the time in Spain when Muslims, Christians and Jews actually lived together harmoniously and quite productively. There are other periods when they did not for instance a large segment of Italy was under Muslim rule for a period of time and the Pope actually paid jizyah for 80 years according to Arnold Toynbee. So there was a period where the Catholic Church was actually under the yoke of Islam. Islam went all the way upto the northern climates as far as Denmark. Vikings actually became Muslim, Vikings came down and fought against the Spanish Muslims and the Portugese Muslims were defeated and some of them actually became Muslims and others went back to Denmark and some ended up staying in Spain and becoming Normans and invading England. Then you also have the Irish. The Irish connection is a very interesting connection. The Irish connection to the Muslims is very old. It predates Protestant Christianity comes into Ireland and there have been monasteries with Arabic writing found in Ireland. Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem has been found in churches in Ireland. Irish music is heavily influenced by Andalusian Arabian music which was influenced by Persian music because that is where the source of most Islamic music emerges. So a lot of this history is unknown. The reason it is unknown is because not many people really read historical sources. Historians tend to be interested in certain areas. People that are interested in the Islamic phenomena would naturally be the Muslims and there are very few Muslims that study history any more unfortunately. Nabil Matar's book which is called "Islam in England" is an important book but it is only the beginning because there was actually for instance, there was a Muslim period of Muslim rule in England and there are coins that were coined in England with Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem. There were the Renegados who were Europeans that became Muslim and returned to their countries, English people rose to prominence in places like Morocco. There was an Englishman who became Muslim and ended up being a minister

in Morocco. So the history, it is just immense what is out there and needs to be looked at it. There have been periods of antagonism and periods that were not so antagonistic but the general rule is that the Europeans felt the Muslims were a deep threat to them. In Spain, one of the way that the Spanish people say things are fine is “there are no Moors on the coast” in other words there are no Muslims around. That is still used in southern Spain as a way of saying I am doing fine. Also obviously the song of Roland. If any of you studied literature and did the Newtonsanthology, you will have probably read the song of Roland. The song of Roland is in praise of defeating the Muslims the loss of Roland at the hand of these Moors. Charles Martell when he defeats the Muslims at the battle of tours at the 8th century, this is a turning point for the Muslims. They turn back, they stop their conquest in Western Europe and turn back and focus on Spain for the next 800 years. Islam is inSpain which is European Islam and on the other hand you had the Ottomans who took up the idea of jihad and took up the idea of spreading Islam with the sword and for that reason they were constantly invading and attacking Christian-Eastern Europe and they get to Vienna. People may not know but the croissant is actually made by a Viennese baker after they defeated the Muslims in the celebration of eating or devouring the crescent.

So there is hostility, it is historical but generally most Western people are ahistorcial like most Eastern people, they do not know much about history but if you grew up in this country you probably grew up with cartoons such as Crusader Rabbit with ideas of the crusades that Moors in all those films such as El CID were always portrayed as dark, swarthy and violent. In some of the earliest films in this country like the Sheek with Rudolph Valentino the Muslim is portrayed as quite romantic but in the end it turns out that he really is not an Arab, he was European so it was alright for him to take the European girl. The idea that there is antagonism is serious and it is one that Muslims have to look at very seriously but it is also something that Western people need to challenge themselves in trying to look at Islam with less hostility. It is difficult. This book is an attempt at presenting Islam to Muslims in a way that is going to satisfy them in a sense and I think they do a reasonably good job of that and I am going to point out the things in the book that are problematic, I think it is very useful for understanding Islam. The reason that I am interested and why I am teaching this class is because one of the things that we forget about Islam is holistic tradition. It is a totality. The Quran says “do you believe in one portion of the book disbelieve in other parts?”. When you take Islam, you submit to it. That is what it is, it is submission to a total world view. It is a way of looking at the world with eyes of Muslims, they look at the world with eyes of people who have been trained in Western universities or in Western world views and they do not realise how tainted their views are. There are many Muslims who are so disconnected from Allah that they really do not experience anything of the divine in their daily lives and so they live lives that are very divorced from a deep rich spiritual

tradition. The beauty of the book I think is an attempt to look at Islam in a holistic way and it is based on the hadeeth of Jibril.

One of the things also that is very interesting I know that William Chittick studied in a traditional madrassah at least for some period of time so he knows the tradition is very adept at translating text because I have read his translations and I know the Arabic word he is translating and I think he is very adept at what he does. One of the things that they say is classical texts ask too much of the beginning readers. They were not written for people coming from another cultural milieu rather they were written for people who thought more or less the same way the authors did and shared the same world view. It is very dangerous to read a book by Imam al Ghazali and not understand that Imam Ghazali is working in 6th century Eastern Islam and if you attempt to apply your standards or your criterion to the imam, you are doing him a grave misservice because it is simply not fair. On the other hand, the Imam's tradition definitely says something to use today; Imam Ghazali is as relevant today for us as he was when he was writing because he is writing about universals. On the other hand, there are going to be things in Imam Ghazali's book that are not relevant today because they relate to his time and place.

Another thing that he says as a general rule they were written for those with advanced intellectual training. A type of training that is seldom offered in our graduate schools much less on the undergraduate level. Now anybody who has worked in traditional Islamic texts, for instance Imam Ghazali, he assumes in most of his works, not in all of them because he write some as popular works, he is assuming that you have been trained in grammar, rhetoric, logic, dialectic, he is assuming that you have been trained in poetry and prosaity. He is assuming you have been trained in mathematics. He is making these assumptions when he writes his book and so you will find things even if you know Arabic, if you do not know logic you do not realise that he is actually using terms that doesn't mean what they mean to the average Arabic reader. They actually mean something, it is a technical word, it is a technical term. To study in classical texts one has to go through classical training. If you do not, you are just not able to do it and that is why you will see gross mistranslations of classical texts because people do not know the requisite knowledges that are needed to examine the text.

One of the things they mention also is that the texts were basically outlines of an argument. Anybody who has studied any of our classes with any of those traditional texts, that is what you will know, you are dealing with an outline. Texts tended to be pegs upon which the teacher hung the meanings or the commentaries. That is how the traditional Muslim world transmitted

knowledge. When you have learned the alfeia it was not enough just to know those lines of poetry, you had to know the commentary, you had to know all of the examples in order for the rules to become meaningful. Another thing is that the students did not know borrow the books from the library and then return them the following week, they did not buy them, they had to copy them out by hand and spend several months or years studying word by word with a master. I personally did copy out some of the texts that I wrote because they are not published and were not available. There is a great benefit in doing that and I am glad I had that opportunity. I would sit down and word for word the Shaykh would comment on the text. Having studied dozens of books like that with teachers has been immense. Shaykh Muhammad has studied hundreds of books. He has studied 400 books with his father. A lot of them were reading them but many of them were word for word commentaries on these texts. Generally, if you had good training, you would have studied at least 30-40 books well before a teacher would let you move on your own and be able to study from the text.

Now this also I think is very interesting. We are perfectly aware that many contemporary Muslims are tired of what they consider outdated material. They would like to discard their intellectual heritage and replace it with scientific endeavours such as sociology. By claiming that Islamic heritage is superfluous and that the Quran is sufficient, such people have surrendered to the spirit of the times. Those who ignore the interpretations of the past are forced to interpret their text in the light of the prevailing world view of the present. This is a far different enterprise than that pursued by the great authorities who interpreted their present in the light of grand tradition and who never felt preyed to update the most obsolescent of all obstructions. So one of the beauties of the ancient tradition, a writer writing in the 12th century is writing from the same world view as a writer in the 3rd century or the 4th century really and that is where there is a continuity of interpretation. They did not succumb to the temptations of the time. One of the things that the moderns do is that they interpret everything in light of their time and then people will look back later and see how ridiculous much of what they come up with sounds. That is why if you look at the 19th century, phrenology was considered to be the most uptodate way of understanding personality and that was feeling bumps on people's heads to determine their character types. This was considered deeply scientific in the 19th century and likewise there will be things today that 50 or 100 years from now, people will wonder and marvel at how people could fall for that type of nonsense. This is one of the dangers of that.

Then he says another thing that we find often in short histories of Islamic thought, intellectuals appear a bit foolish for apparently spending a great amount of time discussing irrelevant details. Muslim scholars would go into great detail about certain things and there is a kind of idea that

they were really irrelevant issues. What he says in fact much of what they were discussing is being discussed in the contemporary world but just in different terms so we have semantic analyses going on now. We have people that are deeply involved in the analyses of language. You will find that amongst Muslims historically. Some of the most extraordinary scholars of grammar emerged out of the 3rd, 4th and 5th century of Iraq. In fact there has been a PhD theses that was done by one scholar showing how a great deal of modern linguistic theory actually comes out of 3rd or 4th century Iraq from linguists that read that material and basically used it to present their own ideas. That is something Mark Twain said “the ancients stole all of their best ideas from us” so that is an old game reading ancients. If you look at some of the most popular authors out there and if you have read the classics you know exactly where they are getting their material but they make it sound uptodate and new becomes it was. Epictetus who was saying those things in the self help book, it would sound a little trite “how will I be helped by a slave who lived almost 2000 years ago in Rome”.

Finally he says as authors we have our own lenses. Some people may criticise us for trying to find Islam’s vision of itself within the Islamic intellectual tradition and the Sufi tradition in particular but it is precisely these perspectives within Islam that provide the most self conscious reflection of the nature of the tradition. So they are definitely working from an intellectual tradition and it is a classical tradition. The Sufi tradition is not the Sufi tradition that many people now speak ill of but rather most of the scholars of the past, our greatest scholars, did have a perspective which was rooted in their own spirituality and in an interpretation and explanation of Islam based on that, that was in fact the science of tassawuf. So that is not an innovation, in fact it is part of the tradition and that is what they show.

Now in the introduction basically they say the religion was established by the Quran through the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). A Muslim is one who submitted to God’s will, one who follows the religion of Islam. The Quran is a book that got revealed to the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) by means of the angel Jibril and this is the basic story. Now to flesh that out. Over 1400 years ago on a mount outside of Makkah in which a man was meditating and an angel came to him and told him Iqra (read) and this was the beginning of the revelation which is called wahy. From that, everything comes. That is the foundation. So the Quran sets this whole thing in motion and now we are on a planet in which one out of every five people believes in the Quran as a revelation from God. So this began with one man given a revelation from an angel. Now the Quran, they say that the Muslim view unlike the Christian view, the Quran is only in Arabic. A Christian will generally say when they speak about the Bible, they will say “well it says in the bible”. A Muslim would never say that about Yusuf Ali’s commentary if they understand Islam.

They will say “well the translation says”. They will never say the Quran says. You should not say that because a translation is ultimately an interpretation and therefore no Muslim accepts any translation of the Quran as definitive. There is no definite translation of the Quran because of the nature of the Arabic language and the nature of language in general. Every language has the possibility of multiple interpretations.

I recently finished translating after two years a poem by Imam al Busiri which is 160 lines. I re-translated it three times, literally I translated it first time and sent it to somebody who edited it for me, it came back with a lot of changes, it forced me to go back to it a second time and I went through it again and then the last time I completely just re-translated it. At a certain point I realised that if anybody read Borehey Horeheads who was a surrealist Argentinian writer and one of the motifs that he often explores is the eternal recurrence of events and I realised that I could be in a Borehesion story where I would just keep translating this thing for infinity because there was always a new possible meaning. There was always a word that could be something else. If you look in a book of synonyms you will find for the same word several different possibilities. Trying to understand exactly what that poet meant when he said this and then the possible syntactical changes. Quran is Arabic, We have given this in Arabic. It is an Arabic Quran. That is why the Quran is Arabiyyah and you do call a translation Quran. It is not even called Quran. The meaning of Quran is it was uttered, revealed, incapacities anybody from imitating it. It was sent to worship Allah, that is the Quran and it is Arabic.

So that is very important and this is why there are many different interpretations of the Bible. If you look at the new American version and then look at King James, they are completely different, sometimes the meaning is completely different. So what do you follow and who determines what it means. There are obviously multiple interpretations of the Quran but if you have completed the 15 different sciences or the 12 according to Ibn Juzai needed to master the Quran before you can interpret it, once you have completed those sciences and your interpretation is congruous with the Arabic language and does not stop to contradict anything that the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said, it is an acceptable translation so the Quran is open to multiple interpretations, always has been and always will be. He mentions that the Quran was translated into Persian early on which is true but they were more intralinear in notes, they were actually not done for the masses, they were done for the rules so the original interpretation of the Quran was not given to the mass of people. It was the same idea that the Catholic Church held. They kept the Bible in Latin and did not translate it into vernaculars until Lutherism and Protestantism began that process because they felt that you should master certain sciences before you read the Bible because you will misinterpret it so the idea was do not put it out there for the

common people and traditionally that idea was understood in Islam that you can read the Quran for worship but you should not attempt to interpret it until you have mastered certain sciences and then also that the Quran has, he mentions 7 meanings. He is referring to the hadith that says “Quran was revealed in seven different letters” and there is a lot of debate about what they exactly means but there is a hadith in which the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “every ayah has an inward, outward and an overseer” so the idea is that there are meanings. You become an esoterist when you only accept the outward meaning. Sunni Muslims have always believed that the Quran has both inward and outward meanings and neither should be rejected. It is also mentioned that this Quran which created an incredible civilisation addresses simple people and sophisticated people, philosophers and kings as well peasants and shepherds. That is one of the attractions and the powers of the Quran, it literally speaks to the highest and the lowest and there is a common ground that it finds because it is speaking about the most important things that we deal with and also mentioning the Quran spread within 100 years from China all the way to Spain and all of those various people spoke different languages and yet dispute the fact that the Quran was in Arabic, the Quran was able to speak to all of them because it was speaking to their hearts and minds not just their ears, to their tongue. It was speaking about meanings that human beings share and that is why the Quran is a universal book.

One of the things, if you read some other traditions you will notice that in their scriptures there is a great deal of geographical things that really relate to living in the jungle for instance where Islam, if you look at the Quran, it is speaking to people who travel on the ocean despite the fact that Arabs did not travel on the ocean so it speaks to sailors in the middle of the ocean dealing with massive waves. It also speaks to people traveling in the desert. It speaks to people traveling in the mountains, people who live, agriculturalists, pastoralists. It speaks to merchants, it speaks to people who have trades, people who make things by hand so everybody will find themselves in the Quran and the Quran does speak to everyone.

One of the powerful unifying factors of Islam is the fact that it invites all of us with Arabic so Christians for instance have liturgical services in Korean, Japanese, Polish, Sanskrit all these various languages whereas Muslims, their worship is one language so we all share that. So whatever mosque you went to, you will hear the same Quran recited, you will not hear a different Quran and that is a unifying factor for us as one people. Also the Quran is about the same size as the New Testament in terms of actual link although it differs from the Old Testament and the New Testament by consensus. Both of those books were compiled by several different people where the Quran was given by one person and that is in agreement. Even though there are people like Patricia Crone and other scholars who have attempted to say the Quran was put together by

a committee of people after the Prophet's (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) death and they added what they wanted and took out what they wanted. This was in Atlantic Monthly, it has come up a few times. Those are rejected even by the Orientalist people that work within the Orientalist tradition do not accept those theories and Patricia Crone has backtracked quite a bit. She is not saying things like she was three or four years ago. She is teaching in the East Coast now, she was originally at SOAS. She is no longer saying the same things because she was given so much flak by the Orientalist community. When you read those things, you have to understand that those things are not even accepted by the non Muslim scholars of Islam.

Nicholson who taught Arberry in his book on the history of Arabic literature says that we have to admit that the Quran is definitely the word of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). It is what he taught his people and anybody who knows the prolific memories of the Muslims and the Arabs in particular know that this book has been transmitted orally and I will give you an example. Muhammad Hasan Al Dudu who came here and gave a talk here who has probably close to a photographic memory and has memorised several books of hadith. He memorises al Bukhari by heart and I had a handwritten copy of Bukhari that he took a look at and found two mistakes on the first page he was looking at and he pointed them out. That is why traditionally the Muslims depended on people not books themselves and people do not understand that. People are actually more when they have powerful memories and they devote their memories to preserving knowledge. They are actually more trustworthy than the text itself. Scribes make mistakes, whereas a Hafidh does not. He might make a mistake but he will catch himself if he is a true Hafidh. That is why no true Hafidh who masters the Quran needs anybody to interrupt him. He can work it out, if you leave him alone, he will work it out for himself. All of us have seen that, who have prayed behind a really strong Hafidh in taraweeh prayer. A hafidh is someone who memorises the Quran by heart.

The shortest surah has 10 words and the longest one over 6000. Each of the verses is called ayah which means a sign. They go into quite a bit of detail about that. Now one of the interesting differences between the Quran and the Bible is that the Quran is about God. Now that might surprise somebody to hear that the Quran differs from those traditions but if you read the bible you will find a great deal of the Bible does not really talk about God. It talks about history, tribes, people's problems, families, a lot of things but you will not actually find God mentioned for several pages in sections of the bible. In the Quran on the other hand, no matter what God is talking about, He will always bring it back to Allah and one of the ways He does that is by using His divine names, He will end the ayah by saying He is the Merciful, Giving, He is over all things Capable, so the Quran always bring us back to that most important subject which is Allah

and that is why if you look at a red lettered Quran you will notice that every single page in the entire Quran is filled with the name of God. If you look at a red lettered Bible you will be quite surprised to find that a good deal of the Bible does not make mention of God. That is not to say anything wrong about the Bible but it is an interesting difference between the two books.

One of the things that he mentions here is that people who are native speakers feel a propriety relationship to the Quran in other words it is mine alone and nobody else's particularly Arabs. Arabs definitely have that feeling that if you do not understand Arabic, you cannot really understand the Quran. I personally do not believe that is true. I think there are ajamy people who do not know Arabic but are actually more moved by the Quran than many many Arabs and I know some people especially South Asians who have seen their mothers or fathers weep profusely reading the Quran and they don't even know the meanings of the Quran but they know it is God's words and that is what is impacting them than the fact that they are reading God's revelation and that is why there is a famous story of one of the ajam who heard the Quran and began to weep and one of the Arabs said to him you are an ajamy and "how can you weep by hearing the Quran". He said "my tongue is ajamy but my heart is Arabi". The heart can understand things that the mind does not necessarily understand. This is important also. A general rule is that a person with no grounding in the Islamic world view, if they pick up a translation of the Quran will have their prejudices confirmed and I think that unfortunately that is very true. If you go to the Quran already with prejudices you will find exactly what you are looking for, I knew it, they do it and it is right there. They are looking for that so they found it and when you are looking for something you are often blinded to the other things so prejudices can be confirmed by the Quran. If you don't allow the Quran to speak to you that is why the Quran begins "this is guidance for people who already have plenty" and it says "this is a book, there is no doubt in it". It already declares its position right from the start. If you have doubt about this book, it is not going to benefit you. If you believe automatically that it is not a revelation from God then you are going to read it with that perspective. If however you go to it and I say I want to find out "is this a revelation from God?". It is not that you have doubt, you don't know anything about it and you simply want to see for yourself so going sceptically and going objectively are very different and you have very different experiences in taking these routes.

Another thing is that the Quran and the world view of the Quran is definitely connected to the Arabic language. The Arabic language is a Semitic language, it is the language that Moses and Jesus spoke. They spoke Semitic languages. The root structures of Aramaic and Hebrew are very similar in Arabic. Hebrew scholars are forced to use Arabic dictionaries by their own

admittance to interpret the Hebrew language. The reason for that is that the Rabbi's prohibited putting down a great deal the midrash. They have an oral tradition that was not permitted to be put down and they never bothered to do any dictionaries. The Arabs began to write dictionaries immediately and literally in the 8th century the first Arabic dictionary, which is already a sophisticated dictionary unlike the English dictionary, we find our first dictionary is in the 16th century and it is a bad dictionary. It is a lousy dictionary whereas the Arabs were already writing extremely sophisticated dictionaries by 100 years of Islam. Another thing about Arabic is that it was preserved by poetry. Aishah memorised 12,000 lines of poetry from just one poet. That is not an exaggeration because I know people who have memorised far more than 12,000 lines personally so I know that is not an exaggeration.

On page 19, there is one expression there that I thought inappropriate and you can see it for yourself but I crossed it out in mine and I do not want to repeat it. They were using an English idiom and I do not think they intended anything by it but I don't believe it is appropriate to say in conjunction with the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). Let me put it this way. The Quran is a miracle of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). The Quran is his miracle, in other words the Quran is part of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) because he is the first and greatest Muslim.

Now next is the Quran. It has 114 chapters, it is a non linear book and that becomes problematic for Western people that are used to a book like Genesis that begins in the beginning and goes by history. You read the Quran and it does not begin in the beginning. It begins exactly where Allah wants to begin it. It begins Alif Laam Meem and nobody knows what that means which I think is one of the greatest proofs of the Quran because I don't think that anybody can think of it, to start a book with letters that nobody knows what they mean. To show you that over everybody who knows something there is somebody who knows more. You have to do to the book humbly because it is already telling you that you do not know everything. You know very little so that is important to remember.

The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) on the bottom of page 20, it mentions that is some traditions that the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) contemplated suicide. That is not true, he did not contemplate suicide. He was deeply troubled which is another proof of his prophecy because one of the things about false prophets is that they want to convince you that they are sent from God whereas the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) his first response was what is happening to me. When it was confirmed by his wife and by Waraqah, the cousin of his wife, at

that point it hit home what was happening but initially he was very troubled and it was a deep shock. He was not reluctant at first to submit, they mention that also reluctance at first, he was not reluctant in the true sense of that word. He was troubled and he was worried about the responsibility. You can see that in the Quran where it says “don’t try to keep up with the revelation” because he used to try, because he was so worried that he would forget something or that he would not get the whole thing so he had a deep sense of debt and burden of bearing this message.

The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was born in the Arabian Peninsula. He was born into an environment of idolatry. He disdained idolatry early on. He did not like the idols, he never swore by the idols, he never prostrated to an idol. He had a natural inclination to tawheed or unity of God. There was a tradition on the Arabian Peninsula called the Hunafah, the hanif in Arabic means one who naturally inclines to God. These people who knew that God was one, they believed they were on the path of Abraham. They did not follow Jews or Christians but they believed in this unity of God. There were several of them but they were really not many. They were several in a sense that you could count them on your fingers but there were not a great deal of them. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) inclined towards that tradition but he had no revelation until he was 40 and then he began to have true dreams. He used to go to his mountain and do a type of emptying out or to remove any traces of idolatry of his people. It does not mean traces, it means avoiding or shunning idolatry. It was this purification work and that is when revelation comes. The Arab tribes considered themselves, we consider and believe that the Arabs are descendents of Ishmael. Ishmael is the son of Ibrahim or Abraham. Ishmael was the first born. He was the son of Hajar and he was according to the Bible, “he would sire a great nation”. That is what the Torah says. One of the things that Martin Lings says is that the Torah is a sacred book not a profane book and God will not put great with anything profane. In other words, he will sire a great nation, that means they would be a great nation in God. Another thing is that the official Jewish doctrine, and a lot of people do not know this, but the official Jewish doctrine of some of the greatest Jewish rabbis including Minmodes, Nihamidies, several of the greatest commentators of the Torah believe that the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was a divinely inspired person and that his revelation was from providence. They actually believed it was from God but they believed it was not specifically for them. They believed that it was a fulfillment of Zachariah’s prophecy which is in the book of Zachariah. You can read this in books of Jewish theology that are not influenced by the politics in the Middle East. The Jews believed when Zachariah said the teaching this pure teaching of what was given to the Jews would spread to the East and to the West. The traditional interpretation of that is that it was Christianity that went to the West and Islam that went to the East and the traditional interpretation was also that Christians were half prosletise in other words their understanding was marred because of the trinity whereas

Muslims had a full understanding of the unity of God and they were in a better position to prepare the world for the coming of the Messiah who would bring tawheed to the entire world.

The Jewish position of some of the greatest Rabbis is that Islam is a vehicle of providence and that it was a way of preparing the world for the coming of the Messiah. Now obviously we believe the messiah was Isa (Jesus) and so do the Christians but it is interesting to note that is a position. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) who is a son of Ishmael when he was given this message at the age of 40 initially he just spread it secretly and then at a certain point Allah commanded him to go out and teach it to the people and he did. The response that the Arabs gave “those who disbelieve say these are fables of old” in other words these are fairy tales which is very interesting because this is a very modern thing to say about revelation so it is interesting that the Quran dealt with that type of response.

One of the things also that they mention which is in Surah Naml “we have already been promised this before us and those who went before us” (27:68) meaning the Jews and Christians, these are just fables. Some of the Arabs did not believe this. The turning point for the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) comes when he makes the hijrah. This is a major turning point for his teaching because after 13 years of oppression he makes the hijrah, goes to Yathrib, this resulted from a delegation that was sent to him. The Aws and Khazraj were two Yemeni tribes who had migrated many generations before to this city called Yathrib. It was an agricultural city largely date palms and they had battles with each other, they were constantly fighting. It was inter-tribal warfare and they were getting really tired of it and they wanted an end to this violence. There was a Jewish community living there and they tended to be traders although some of them had date palms also. They controlled the market place in Madinah and they used to tell the Arabs about the final Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam), how he would show up and he was going to show up in this city and that he would remove all their idols and that he would purify their land and bring the true teaching. Now these Jews believed that it would be a Jewish Prophet so when the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) emerged they said to each other “maybe this is the man that the Jews were talking about” so they wanted to go and see for themselves and when they did they ended up becoming Muslim and submitting to the Prophet's (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) dream and then the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) migrated to them and these incredible bonds of brotherhood occurred between those who migrated and the people of Madinah. The hijrah marks the first date, it begins year 1 for the Muslims so in a sense this is the beginning of real time for us when Islam becomes successful, established in the earth. That is year 1 for the Muslims.

In terms of tradition, we have three types of traditions:

- Quran which we believe is wahy, revelation from God spoken through the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) from Jibril
- Revelation that is spoken through the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). This is called hadith. This means that the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) is speaking inspired. He is inspired by God. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) does not speak from his own passion, this is revelation coming to him. Even his hadeeth is revelation. We believe that, that is why you will not find any table talk, you will not find any trite conversation. You will not find any vigilantes in the hadith. All of the hadith have meanings and implications for the lives of Muslims. The hadith are divided into three basic essential types:
 1. Ahad which are narrated by solitary transmitters, 1,2, 3 or 4. Those have less strength.
 2. Mutawatir which is multiply narrated transmitters. There are only a few hundred of them. Those have the same status of the Quran in terms of absolute belief that they come from the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and you should not reject them. An example of that is the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) prohibited the killing of children and women in war. That is multiply transmitted. There are so many narrations for that it is impossible for that to be a mistake. That is why that is agreed upon by scholars.
 3. Hadith Qudsi which is revelation from God but the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) transmits it as a hadith. It does not have the same status as the Quran in that we cannot recite it in the prayer but we believe also that it is directly from God. An example of that is God says according to the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) “every action is for the son of Adam except fasting. It is Mine alone”. Because Allah is the only One who does not eat or drink in reality. So when you fast you are doing an action, in a sense it is the closest thing we do that has a divine quality because only God does not eat or drink, we all need to eat and drink. That is one interpretation, there are many others.

We also believe that the Quran is eternal and uncreated. That means the meanings of the Quran in other words it is not the literal words in the book but we only say that when we teach. We still say that the Quran is uncreated. We believe that the Quran, what is between these two covers, is the uncreated word of God. We can say that but when we say that we have an understanding that it does not literally mean the letters and the ink. It is the meaning that those words convey.

On page 24 they mentioned about Sayyidina Ali not giving up his claim. They are giving a Shia perspective. That is not a Sunni perspective. We believe that Imam Ali in fact took bayah with Abu Bakr which he says there and the Shia admit that but we believe he took it believing that Abu Bakr was the rightly guided caliph and that Abu Bakr was better than Ali. There is a hadith in Sahih Bukhari in which Ali clearly says that Abu Bakr was better than him and so was Umar.

Another important thing that they mention here is that generally the Muslims lived with many different religions. They did not persecute religions. There are four instances, it does occur, but they are always rejected by the scholars and they were also clearly done by rulers that were manipulating situations for their own political advantage, short sightedness that lead to a lot of problems but Muslims generally treated other religions very well, kept their Churches, Synagogues and Temples intact including Zoroastrians, Hindus and Buddhists. Afghanistan which was a very profound Buddhist country before the Muslims got there. The Afghanis converted from Buddhism and some of the greatest Muslims came out of the Buddhist tradition. In fact Bugh was a centre for Buddha logic and those logicians became Muslim and introduced interestingly enough into Islamic theology some Buddhist logical formations that do not exist in Greek logic. Greek logic does not have a neither a or b type scenario whereas Buddhist logic does. In traditional Islamic theology you have situations where you do have that neither a nor b. I really believe that it does come out of the influence that the Buddhist logicians had on Islam. I actually wrote a paper “how the Buddhists saved Islam” which was about that but somebody said do not submit it as you will get too much flak.

Another thing which is important is that generally Muslim rulers did not want people to become Muslim. The reason they did not want them to become Muslim is because they lost revenue and they also had to deal with the egalitarian nature of Islam so that is a fact. If you do not believe that, if you have some kind of romantic utopian version of Islam, it is a fantasy. All you have to do is read history. The Muslims were very honest in their history. You actually had to join an Arab tribe to become a Muslim and the person who ended that was Umar bin Abdul Aziz during Bani Ummayah. Before that you literally had to join an Arab tribe. You were a maula which was an inferior position. There is a movement in Iraq called the Shuhubia which means the people’s movement or the popular movement and these were all non-Arabs who got fed up and went into the revolt against it. So there were problems early on. There were ethnic problems, tribal problems, this is the human condition. The beauty of Islam is that it was always redressing and the ulema were always redressing these problems. This is what I love about Islam. You have in this country 100 years ago Rabbis and Priests writing treaties that black slavery was Biblically sanctioned. You can find that, I guarantee you, you can look it up in books on slavery in this

country. Muslims have never had that, we do not have a history ever of our ulema, justifying oppression textually. It just does not exist. On the contrary, they really wrote vehemently against those things. Jahil wrote a book about the preference of blacks over whites because he was a black man. It was more than if you look historically there were a lot more great black people than white people and he has a whole book to prove it. There is a beautiful book by Ibnul Jawzi called Tanveer al Ghubish “removing any darkness concerning the virtues of black people in Ethiopia”. This was an Iraqi imam who wrote an entire book showing all the virtues of black people and one of the things that he says in that book is that anybody that narrates the Israeli view that blacks were the accursed descendents of Ham, there is no textual basis for that and the Quran rejects that. Then he says the reason blacks are dark skinned is because they have been living so long in the Southern hemisphere that they have developed protective skin. He actually says that, he gives a scientific analysis which is generally what people believe now.

Questions

We are not supposed to interpret the Quran but we are supposed to reflect on its meanings. Please clarify.

A great deal about the Quran is reflection. Haven't they looked at the camel, how it was created? Haven't they looked at the heavens, how they were raised up? Haven't they looked at the mountains, how they have been placed standing firm? Haven't they looked at the earth, how We have stretched it out, so remind them. Those are things to think about. You do not need to interpret those verses, they are very clear. Much of the Quran is very clear. However, when the Quran says if you fear disobedience or incalcutrance from your spouse then warn her, abandon the bed and then strike her, you are not allowed to interpret that, it is haram for you to interpret that, nor can you apply that ruling in your house because it is in the Quran. It is haram for you to do that. Muslims have always believed that. You need to ask scholars the interpretation of that verse and then you are surprised to find out that it does not mean what you probably thought it meant. That is what I mean by not interpreting the Quran. Those are the verses that deal with actual behaviour. In those verses, you must go to scholars because you might completely misunderstand it. For instance, gheebah it says “don't let some of you backbite against others”. You have to understand there is a ruling. There are seven situations in which that law does not apply. Then you have to know the definition of backbiting. You might think it means speaking about things that are not true. On the contrary it means things that are true. So you have to understand and that comes from scholars. It comes from people who understand the Quran so

that is what I mean. Verses in the Quran that Allah says “in the creation of the heavens and the earth alternating in the night and day are signs for people who have deep reflection, innermost core” you can reflect on that. The Quran is filled with things. You can read it for that. Do not try and derive rulings from it, that is all.

What is normative?

Normative is what the religion says about itself. It is not telling you how Muslims behave, it is telling you how they are supposed to behave and that is a much fairer way of looking at a religion. It is to look at the idea and not the reality. Saeed Hussain Nasr wrote a book “Islam: Ideas and realities”. America has an ideal, freedom, liberty and justice for all. That is a beautiful ideal, we can all agree with that. Unfortunately that has not been the reality of America. Intelligent Americans are the first to admit that but there does seem to be an attempt and certainly the civil war is an example of that. The freeing of slaves in this country, the civil rights. It has taken a long time to get to things that Islam aimed at 1400 years ago but there is an effort so ideals and realities are very different. The Geneva convention is beautiful ideas about how to treat prisoners of war. The reality is that prisoners of war are treated like animals and worse than animals all the time. Sensory deprivation is torture. It is called passive torture and it actually drives people insane.

In some Christian texts, it says descendents of Issac were great people and the descendents of Ishmael caused great havoc on the earth.

Not true, there is good in both the sons. There is some bad offspring that came out of there but you cannot blame the parents. You can sometimes blame them for what their children do if they were neglectful but you cannot blame them for what their grandchildren do. That is not their fault.

Could you explain what you meant the “Quran was his miracle”?

In other words to say that the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) is not central to the Islamic teaching is wrong. To say he was a messenger and gave his message and that is the end of it, that

is not true. Ibn Taymiyyah was once asked “can you say hadith not been for the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) the world would not have been created” in his book on Tasawuf. Ibn Taymiyyah said that statement has truth in it. The reason is that every thing that is less virtuous serves the more virtuous. So the example he gives is that you kill animals for the benefit of humans because humans are higher. We are higher, we do not believe like Helen Caldicott, she thinks all animals are equal. A dog has as much right to be here as a human being. A dog does have the right to be here and does have rules in Islam legislated for protecting animals and things like that but if an animal has more right to be here and that is why if a dog threatened the life of a human, you kill the dog. Whereas if a human threatened the life of a dog, you do not kill the human. I mean he is doing something wrong, but you don't kill him. Even this society accepts that as a principle so the idea that all animals are equal is not true. The same is true about human beings. Not all humans are equal. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) is the highest human being and the Prophets, all of them are higher than human beings. For that reason we have less importance than a Prophet.

Now the reason Allah created human beings, there are three reasons given in the Quran:

1. He created us to cultivate the earth
2. He created us to inherit the earth and to leave it as a legacy to those who come after us so we inherit it from our fathers and mothers and we leave it as a legacy for our children.
3. The most important and primary reason is that we were created to know God. No one knows God better than the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and for that reason he is the most important human being ever created because he has fulfilled more perfectly the purpose for which we were created which is to know God. So from that perspective, he is central and the centrality of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) will be shown on the day of judgment when all human beings will recognise the station he was given and Muslims believe that. To say somehow he is secondary I do not accept that. I do not because that is not what I was taught.

Can you give a Quran to a non Muslim in Arabic?

I would not give the Quran to a non Muslim in Arabic. It is not permitted to give the Quran to a child if it has Arabic in it because a child does not have wudu and it is an obligation to have wudu if you touch the Arabic Quran so I would not give the Quran to any non Muslim unless it was something like Thomas Cleary “The Essential Quran” because what Thomas Cleary did in

that book, he did not put any of what could be called the hard verses, the verses that really do need interpretation.

You said the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was the first and best Muslim but the Quran describes Musa and others as saying “I am Muslim”.

Yes they were but the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “I was a Prophet and Adam was still uncreated” and that is a sound narration before any of the other Prophets. He has a relationship to Isa which is very interesting. Isa is destined as being like Adam and the Prophet is a Prophet after Adam and yet he was created before Adam and Isa is like Adam and Isa was a Prophet before the Prophet and the Prophet is the last Prophet yet Isa comes before the Prophet. So it is a very interesting relationship with Isa. It says in the Quran the likeness of Isa is like Adam so Isa is like Adam in relationship to the Prophet as well as in relation to the creation because he comes after the Prophet yet he is not a Prophet after the Prophet. He is a Prophet before the Prophet and Adam was a Prophet before the Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) yet the Prophet was before Adam. So it is a very interesting relationship. That is something called “daughter of my idea” so I have never seen that written but it is something that occurred to me once.

Last grains of sand: You always have to ask yourself where you are in relation to that because your life is somewhere. If you look at those grains of sand like your breaths. You have a certain amount that are decreed for you and every breath you take is close to the last one and then one day that last breath comes and you never know. A baby is right there if they live a normal life. So it is a nice thought to think about if you watch a sand clock. Sand clocks are so amazing because they are true than these other clocks that give you an illusion of things returning. You can turn them back upside down.

Chapter 2

The hadith of Jibril is really considered probably one of the most important hadith in all of the hadith literature and the reason for that is it is a summation of the entire Islamic teaching. It sums up Islam. It was also a hadith in which the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was told 80 days before he died so it is very close to the last period that he was with us in physical flesh. The

hadith is related by Umar ibnul Khattab. Umar is the second caliph, he is also the second closest person to the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) in terms of companionship, Abu Bakr being the first. He begins by telling us that they were sitting with the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and then he said a man in white clothes, stark black hair, very striking person emerges and he says we could not see any traces of travelling on him.

Now what is interesting about that remark is that this is a desert town, Madinah, there are only really a few thousand people living in this town. It is a village more than a city. It is considered a city by Arabian standards but it is certainly not a place in which people did not know each other. People knew everybody there. Now when this man comes in white robes very clean, very fresh, so signs of travelling, they thought that was strange, this is why he mentions it because where did he come from. He would have had to have showered, changed his clothes. Nobody knew where this man came from and nobody had ever seen him before. He sits down and places his knees against the knees of the Prophet which is very intimate, then he places his hands on the Prophet's (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) thighs. Now in this hadith which is the one that is the famous it does not mention it, it just says he put his two palms on his thighs. But there is another hadith that says on the Prophet's (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) thighs. Now there are some reasons for doing that. It would have been a very intimate thing to do as if he would have known the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam), he would not have done that. The way he sat was an eastern way of sitting. Traditionally that was a way a student sat, in madrassah it would have been considered rude not to sit like that. Obviously if you have noticed Persian people that can sit like that for long periods of time. It is very commonplace in some Muslim countries where they still sit on the floor.

So then he says "tell me O Muhammad about Islam". The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) says Islam is shahada. That is the first thing he says. That you testify that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his messenger which is an act. It is not a belief, shahada is not a belief, it is an act. It is an act done with the tongue. People forget that in Islam words are considered actions. Imam Malik said when you realise your words are actions, if you have intelligence your words diminish because you are taken to account for your actions. The more words you have, the more accountability you have. He said it is to say the shahada. That is the first pillar, rukun, a rukun is something that you depend on. It is something that holds other things up. Then he said you pray, that you pray five times a day. Then he said you pay zakat, alms tax, you fast during Ramadhan and then you make the pilgrimmage to the House if you are able to. At that point the man says "you spoke the truth". Umar said "we were really dumbstruck at that point". He is asking him and then he is confirming what he is saying. This is very strange because he is asking

him a question so now one of the things that we learn is, a question is a teaching device. A teacher will ask a question not because he does not know the answer but because he wants something else to happen so he asks him. This question and they still do not know who this person is. Then he says “now tell me about faith”. So we are moving to another dimension of Islam. The first is Islam then he says now tell me about imaan. So here is a distinction between Islam and imaan which is going to be very important. Then he tells him faith is that you believe in Allah so now he is not telling him what imaan is, he is telling him what the objects of imaan are because imaan in itself is a mystery. You cannot explain in words what imaan is. The next best thing you can tell is you can explain the objects of belief. Belief itself the ulema say is tasdeeq. It is to verify or affirm or have a conviction in one’s heart about something. This is what belief is but he gives the objects of faith. He tells him it is a belief in Allah, His Angels, His books, his Messengers, the last day and that you have faith in this measuring out of the world that everything is determined and proportioned and that you believe in both good and evil which is very interesting because this is a problem in religion. It is called the odyssey which is the problem of evil. For Christians it has probably been the bugbear of Christianity of trying to explain the presence of evil in the world. It has never been a problem for the Muslims. The Muslims are not maniciest, they do not believe in duality. Muslims have never believed in this idea of two forces antagonistically working in this world. Muslims believe that good and evil are creations of Allah. Allah is above good and evil in terms of the scales by which we judge them because we do to have the ability to judge good and evil in reality. That is why we have been given standards, killing is bad. We do not kill. Stealing is bad, we do not steal. But there are other instances where stealing becomes acceptable so there are situational ethics. These are instances where killing is acceptable, is it murder or retribution? What is going on? So the act in itself is not evil. What is evil is the reason and intention which is if it is wrong or oppressive. So it is very interesting, that is part of the creed that Muslims believe in and we are going to get into that in a lot of detail when we get to the section on imaan because it is very important.

The he said again he’d spoken the truth. He says now tell me about doing what is beautiful and ihsan is a very difficult word to translate in Arabic. If you look at the root word ihsanah it means to be beautiful. That is what it means. Ihsan if you look at the word ahsanah it means to make something beautiful. It is called the transitive form of the intransitive world. If you know English grammar, an intransitive very does not take an object. A transitive word takes an object so hasunah takes no object. You say hasanah zaydun. Zaydun is good. If you said ahsannah zaydun, you need an object. What did Zayd do that was good? Ahsanah zaydun illan amr. Zayd did good to Amr so there the idea then in ihsan is that it is doing virtuous deeds. It is an act of bringing virtue into the world, it is the highest thing in Islam. By doing virtuous deeds you make the world more beautiful.

Now there is also an interesting ethical theory that comes from a man Chisholm who said that ethics is actually a branch of aesthetics which is interesting. In philosophy, that is studying beauty, what makes things beautiful. Like I was driving on the way here this morning and I looked up on the hill and there were all these poppies. It is the state flower. Poppies are very beautiful and the way the golden poppy is mixed in with the green right now is stunning. What is it that in us that recognises and sometimes fails to recognise, but what is in us that sees the world as beautiful and what is in us that sees things as ugly because had there been a bunch of garbage on the side of the hill as opposed to flowers, I would have had a different experience. Something is incongruous. It does not fit in and that is the essence of aesthetics. It is about fitting in. The essence of virtuous actions is that they are actions that fit properly into the world. That is why at the essence of Islamic teaching is the concept of adab. Adab is comportment. It is appropriate behaviour. Appropriate behaviour is behaviour done in proper proportions. That is why adab also means literature because what literature is, is the use of words appropriately. You are putting words into their proper place and that is what an adept is.

When an adept uses words in a way, you see if you take a poem in Arabic, Persian or English. If you take a poem like death not be proud, thou some have called thee mighty and dreadful for thou art not so. If you begin to look at the movement of those words, the power is in the placing of the words because if I said death be mighty not, it loses all of its meaning and so language becomes meaningful when words are put into their proper places and the more appropriate the words are in those places the more powerful the impact those words have on the human heart. The same is true for the world itself. The more things are in a natural state the more powerful the experience. That is why everybody and Robert Frost has a beautiful poem about people. Looking at the ocean ever thought what is behind them is land is much more varied and interesting. Why do they keep staring out at the ocean and not turn round and look at the land? There is a lot more to look at. It is the mystery and majesty of it, it is the power of creation itself and the ocean is one of the most powerful things in the world. That is why the Arabs when they want to talk about something vast, they say "it is an ocean". The Arabs say the "Quran is an ocean, there are no shores to that ocean", a shoreless ocean, you cannot even imagine that.

So doing good in the world is beautifying the world so he asks him what you are doing and that is what it is about so he asks him "doing beautiful means you should worship God as if you see him". If you think about what that means, what that means is if you can imagine that you are actually seeing God, how would you behave in the world. How would you treat other people? Other creatures of God? How would you treat God's creation. If you go to somebody's house you don't spit on their carpet, you do not urinate in the corner of the room. Why? Because it is

not your house and you have to behave with proper comportment in the house. The better behaviour that you have, the more likely that he will invite you back so the idea of being in the world as if you see God is the idea that you are a guest in a dominion that belongs to God and that if you actually behave in the world as if you see Him you will behave appropriately. You will behave with excellent manners, you will behave beautifully and that is the essence of ihsan.

Then he says and even if you do not see Him at least you know that He sees you. So the highest stage of ihsan is really to be as if you see God but if you do not at least you know He sees you so that your behaviour is still appropriate. Then he said “tell me about the hour” and the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “the one being questioned does not know more than the one asking the question”. In other words the moment that the world ends is a secret and so then he says “tell me about its signs, marks”. So this is the signs of the latter days. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “the slavegirl gives birth to her mistress” The ulema have always considered this a very unusual statement. The ulema have gone to three dominant interpretations. One of them is that it is the turning upside down of social order, that right becomes wrong. Wrong becomes right. High people become low. Low people become high. The idea of a mistress giving birth to a slave, if you invert that, it is the servant who gives birth to her master. It is an inversion to reality. You see the slave girl give birth to her mistress.

One of the interpretations also is that children will become completely rebellious against their parents which in Confucian understanding is the worst possible sign in a human society, when filial piety no longer exists because the whole social order is based on the authority of the family. The thing about families is that families are not just. Children are in a despotic situation, parents are tyrants basically but what the ethesis say is that justice is only necessary in the absence of love so the reason that we tolerate family situations is because of that other element that exists which is love in other words we know that the parent is doing what they do out of love for the child. So a parent does not allow a child to eat what is harmful candy of whatever or does not allow the child to watch television. These are apparently arbitrary moves on behalf of the parents to the child so the child experiences a type of tyranny. I always loved the one where the child is crawling and the parent comes and just picks it up and goes another direction. If you just look at that total act of despotism, that is a real act of arbitrary despotic behaviour. But obviously there is a reason and that is why it is not tyrannical. It is on the contrary, it is benevolent.

Then the man went away. After we had waited a time, some say it was three days, it was a period of time at which point the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “do you know who the

questioner was Umar?”. It is interesting that he waited a few days. This is also a sign that the sahaba did not ask the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) unnecessary questions because you would think Umar would have said “who was that Ya Rasulallah?” but they were not like that. They were people that asked what was absolutely necessary to ask.

The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “this was Jibril who has come to teach you your religion”. The meaning of that is that this hadith teaches us the religion. That is the whole religion right there. Iman, islaam, ihsan and signs of the last day. I think it is a really interesting way of looking at it, the way Dr Chittick and Dr Murata are looking at it as these are dimensions. You have four dimensional reality which is what we are in, you have the three dimensions with breadth, depth and that is what we experience here if you have binocular vision, one eyed people do not have that depth and perception but we have depth and perception. If you add time which is the fourth dimension that what this hadith deals with is these four dimensions. The dimension that is the horizontal dimension is Islam. That is the most basic, that is the foundation. The vertical dimension is imaan or faith because that is the focus towards the heavens so your behaviour is Islam, the reason you do the behaviour is imaan, and then ihsan gives it depth. It is what gives it depth. It adds that dimension to it and then it plays out in time so we are in time creatures and one of the things we experience about time is signs. The world is signs. Ali said “all of time is two days, a day for you and a day against you. Have thankfulness or gratitude towards Allah for what was for you and be patient about what is against you”. The basic experience of the movement of time is a recognition that there are signs that come into the world that indicate the type of nature of the age we are in. Certainly our age is in many ways a very dark age because people are so distant from scared truths and also have an arrogance that this is the best time ever.

The next idea here is deen because he said “he came to teach you your deen”. What does deen mean? The Arabic word comes from a root word dana which means to discipline. It has the meaning to consider guilty. Idana is when somebody is guilty of something. It also has the idea of debt, indebtedness. Dain is debt, madeen is somebody who is in debt. Da'in is the one who you owe debt to. It also has the meaning of gentle rain that keeps coming back. The religion, at the essence of religion is an idea that it is a life giving rain to the spirit that keeps coming back. It is something that keeps coming back and is reintroduced to humanity again and again. At the essence of the human experience has been these rains that have come, revelations have come, heavenly rains that nurture hearts, that bring people back to life, that bring their lives to a spiritual fruition. The idea also of debt which is also interesting because there is an idea that if somebody loans you money, you feel indebted to them. The idea here is that God has loaned you

your life. It is a loan and the beauty of a loan is that it is not yours but while you have it you can do with it what you want. Now obviously if someone loans you money with a stipulation, if you go to the bank and you tell them “I want 100,000 dollars to buy a house” and then you go and score a kilo of cocaine with the money, obviously you have broken the contract. They would not just give it to you like that. They do not do it like that anymore but generally the idea of taking a loan as a trust. There is a reason why that person has given you a loan, generally people want to know what the loan is for. They ask you “what you do need it for?” The more honourable the reason, the more likely for the loan so the idea of God giving you a loan, a goodly loan, it is the loan of your life and then the beauty of it is on one hand it is a loan, on the other hand, He offers the chance to sell this thing that He is giving you back to Him. That is an honour according to the Quran “Allah bought from the believers” so the idea of God buying from you something is meaning that He is putting you, there is parity in the relationship. It is not that you are an equal to God but in this relationship, He is making you an equal. He is making you someone that has gone into a transaction with Him and the sale is your soul and that is a high thing. So the idea of giving the soul back to God and He pays you for it and that is why when that verse was revealed, everybody was happy except Abu Bakr. He began to weep and the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) looked at him and said “why are you weeping?”. He said “How can we sell back to God what already belongs to God?” So he understood it at a deeper level than everybody else which is why he is Abu Bakr. He understood that, this is an honour from God, that is all it is and so this idea of this debt, that you are morally obliged to pay this debt back and that is what deen is. It is the payback, it is what you do as a way of paying back this immense loan of consciousness, of a heart, that He gave you human consciousness and this is how you pay it back.

Now in the Quran the word “deen” is used a lot. He uses it also when he describes the deen of the King of Egypt in Surah Yusuf “deen of Malik” in the deen of Malik which means the law so it has the idea of law as well. Also when Musa, Firoun says to Musa “let me kill Musa, I am afraid he is going to change your deen” so Firoun says he is worried that Musa is going to attempt to change your deen and then he says “or he will sow corruption on the earth” so this is how “you have your deen, we have our deen” so there is an idea of different deens. That has to do with transaction or how you live your life. Now there is an idea that the deen with God is the same. It has always been the same that is why deen is different to Shariah. Shariah is law, the law changes. So the law of Moses is not the law of Jesus. The law of Jesus is not the law of Muhammad (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). Each one of the Prophets has a different law but their deen is the same. That is why the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “Prophets are of one father but their mothers different”. There are two meanings to that:

1. That they come from Ibrahim (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). Abraham is the father of the Prophets.
2. Their deen is one but their laws differ.

So the deen is tawheed. That is really the father of us all. We are united in this idea of the unity of God. Then the Shariah which are the laws differ and Allah says “We never sent a Messenger before thee save we revealed to him saying there is no God but I so worship Me”. So that is the essence of all of these religious traditions and even according to Dr Cleary. He says that the Buddha was also teaching tawheed as well. One of the things that he says is that the Buddha did not give a word for it because what he said was that his society was so inundated with idolatry the only way he could describe reality was without any attributes at all because these people were so immersed. So he described it in a non descript way of speaking about ultimate reality. The source of all things and we find the same in Daoism. We find these teachings even if they do not have the theistic concept that you find in Western traditions. In the Eastern traditions you do find this idea of an ultimate underlying reality that is the course of all things and that is why even in the Dao it says in the beginning “there was one”. There was the external Dao and then there came two which is the aswaj, creation of pairs which Allah said “we created everything in pairs” and then from the pairs came myriad forms. Two becomes three. All of these religions are teaching this unity so he goes then into three dimensions. What he says is if you can look at the three dimensions or domains of selfhood, the most external dimension is connected to what appears so the outward form, the zahir.

People do things in the world and actions can be analysed and discussed without reference to the people so you can look at an action and you can actually talk about an action without any reference to the person. That is the most outward form. So if somebody hates somebody else, we can talk about “I saw a person hit another person” you do not have to talk about why they hit them, we do not have to talk about who they were. We can talk about a physical act that occurred in the world between two people first the subject and second the object. So then you move to the next dimension which is knowledge. It has to do with looking at the thing that is happening an understanding something about the thing so what does it mean when somebody hits another person. You begin to look at understanding the action itself and then you move into what is the intention behind the action. What is the reason why somebody is doing something. All of these relate to the dimensions of imaan, Islam and ihsaan. So you have dimension of human experience that has to do with knowledge, understanding of a world view so that is about faith, it is how you view the world and then given that you view the world in a certain way, what are the motives? You can have a person that believes in Allah and they are doing the outward forms of Islam but they still have riyaa which is hidden shirk which is doing something for the sake of

somebody else and there are two types of riyaa. One is riyaa al mukhlis which is where you do something only for other people and the other is called riyaa al mushrik. The first one is worse than the second. The second one is when you do it for God but you are also thinking about what other people are thinking. So you can have faith in God but your motives are still problematic and we all know in ourselves and we all know in other people do actions in this world and then you find out there was an ulterior motive behind it. So what you are looking at here then is these three dimensions. You can have an understanding of how we should behave which has to do with imaan and Islam. I should pray five times a day. We should understand why we should do that because God has commanded me to and there comes the element of faith but then the actual movement of my own inner heart to doing that action solely for the sake of God is the realm of ihsan. So these are dimensions he is talking about and she is talking about. It is very interesting because that is part of the eight fold noble path in Buddhism as well, the right understanding, having the correct understanding of the world and then the right action and right reason.

Now he talks about Islamic learning here and one of the things I really like what he and she says is that the Quran says “over everyone who has knowledge there is somebody who ultimately has more knowledge” so he and she mentions the idea of a person in a village in Egypt that goes down to Cairo, memorises the Quran and learns a bit of fiqh and hadith. When he goes back to his village, he is like a big alim. But it is relative, when his Shaykh comes to the village suddenly he is back to being an insignificant student. He might not have even been that good at the madrassah but in the eyes of other people because knowledge has that relative aspect to it that some people have immense amounts of knowledge, some people have less amounts and some people have a little bit. Each degree one is moving up and that is why Allah elevates people in degrees according to their knowledge and according to their right actions. “Allah raises people who believe and were given knowledge in degrees” so that is very important which is why Muslims traditionally have always respected teachers. He mentions that there were no degrees offered. I liked what he and she said about ijaza, the permission to teach. They really felt that degrees and things like that would corrupt the intentions. That is one of the things that Shaykh Muhammad Amin who is one of my teachers in fiqh said “do not give degrees because it corrupts the intention of the students when they come to study”. That is why if you look at universities today, if suddenly all the universities said “O by the way, we are not giving any degrees anymore” how many people would show up to class so learning becomes a means to achieve something else.

In Islam leaning first and foremost is a command from God to learn and learning is based not on earning as livelihood and one of the signs of the end of time, the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa

sallam) said people would study to earn money. It is a sign of the end of time. What happens learning in Islam is to learn how to understand correctly, how to act correctly and how to have the right reasons. So it is about these three dimensions. It is about being an ethical and spiritual human being which does not obviate the necessity of learning trade and things like that, certainly not but at the essence of real knowledge is an understanding that it is for moral and spiritual reasons not for livelihood. So he and she says on page 36 “no degrees were offered so he motivation was learning itself”. One of the things in Al Azhar in 1882 when they first introduced tests, the great Maliki scholar Shaykh Muhammad Aleesh was completely opposed to it, the idea of testing students was anathema to him and I find that really interesting because it creates another reason why people study to pass the test not to know the thing. That is why people cannot ever remember anything after a test.

Now one of the things that is also mentioned is that memorisation, the importance of memorisation, the reason why memorisation is so important is the idea of young people understanding anything was seen as a waste of other quality which children have which is the massive ability to absorb information. So the idea was to put as much knowledge in them in those early years because it is a divine gift that should not be wasted by teaching them trivia and much of what is put in the children’s heads is a complete waste of time. That is why SAT test are ultimately testing vocabulary acquisition, comprehension, analogical reasoning skills and mathematical skills, arithmetic, geometry and basic algebra. They want to see if you learned how to basically think, they are not interested in asking you how high Mount Everest is, what happened in 1066 because you can always look that up in a book and Einstein said “anything I can look up in a book I would not waste my time memorising” which is interesting but you need skills to reason and he certainly had all those formulas in his head.

So now we move to Islam and this is the first chapter. Now Islam in Arabic, *aslama* is a very interesting word, it comes from a root word *selama* which means to be whole which is the same meaning of the root word in Hebrew of *shalom* which is peace. Peace is a wholeness and the idea that peace occurs when things are whole. If you look at sickness in the body, what ultimately sickness is a loss of holism in the body. Some part of the body is no longer working with the other parts of the body so there is a disruption of peace because of a lack of wholeness and so the idea in Islam that wholeness or peace comes through submission to God and it is the exact same thing in Hebrew. The Jews believe the exact same thing that *shalom* can only come when a human being is in a state of submission to God, that is real peace and if you are not, then you are suffering. Submission is not passive surrender even though the words are related and some of the *ulema* say Islam means submission. Submission is not a passive event, it is an active event and

that is where you get the idea of mujihidah of the struggle to surrender. Surrendering is an active and not a passive state.

Now in the Quran they gave four different types of Islam that are mentioned. One of them. One of them is the idea that all of existence is in a state of submission so Islam in the Quran means, the Quran says “everything in the heavens and earth is in a state of submission to God” willingly or unwillingly. If you look at the world al Qahur which is one of the names of God. Al Qahar is the Overpowering One and Allah says He is Overpowering His servants transcending above them. Now one of those things that you see in the world, if I throw that, there are several things that just happened. One is gravity, I did not throw it, it moved up. Even if I want it to, it is going to come down. So there are laws working in the world that by necessity we submit to. One of them is gravity. One of them is our physical bodies, the way they grew, the way our noses grew, the way our eyes came about, all these types of things and manipulating them which is starting to occur now from an Islamic perspective is attempting to rebel against a type of submission or order which is why the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was very opposed to manipulation of nature because it is a type of rebellion. So this idea of submitting willingly or unwillingly is very important in the Quran. This is why the very important verse “do they require other than the deen of Allah and everything in reality is submission”. So there is an idea here that Islam is the order of nature and this is very interesting because this is the exact way that ancient Chinese looked at the world, that there was a natural order and that the Sage was the one who aligned him or herself with the natural order, eating when you are hungry. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “we are a people who only eat when we are hungry”. That is natural, it is natural to eat, you do not see animals that overeat. In nature you do not see fat lions, you see them at zoos because they are no longer in a natural state but you do not see animals that are not behaving according to their natural state. Animals drink when they are thirsty. Human beings will keep drinking, drinking and drinking. If animals want to eat, they will just kill. Humans will slaughter. The native Americans when they hunted, they just killed what they needed because they understood. There are people who go trophy hunting, they kill to put heads on their walls and that is out of natural order. This is why a human being who is not in a natural state is in a state of rebellion. It is seen as they are outside of a fitrah state, the inherent aboriginal nature which does not mean that people are meant to remain primitive but there is an understanding that the primitive state is an expression of something.

There are generally three views of history. One of them is that history went from fall and it has been downhill ever since. This tends to be generally the way Muslims look at the world that we have gone from good to worse. There is another which is cyclical. Ibn Khaldun introduced this.

I think it is the danger of all theories that categories are very dangerous because you get locked in categories and you forget that there can be inter penetration. The idea of cyclical things is that history is constantly repeating itself. Ibn Khaldun saw that and that definitely occurs. The third is the idea of progress, we are going from worse to better which is modernity, the fallacy of modernity. Most moderns are pretty much giving that up as an idea. Certainly the 20th century, 19th century particularly enthralled by that idea but the 20th century was so devastating for human beings that a lot of people are giving that up.

From a Muslim perspective it is a little bit of all three. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "I do not know if the first of ummah is better than the last. My ummah is like rain it will not be able to determine whether the first part of it was the best or the last part". So there is an idea that towards the end of time there is this immense renaissance that occurs of spirituality and that is part of Muslim belief. In some things we get better and in other things we get worse. Certainly in some ideas we are better than in others that existed in the past. In slavery, the fact that most people recognise now to hold people in slavery is just problematic morally. Christianity never abolished slavery it was Gustinian in the 4th century that abolished slavery. Paul talks about treating slaves well and things like that. Christians do not like to talk about that. Then they say Islam says slavery is OK, well so does your book. If you live in glass houses, do not throw stones. Slavery exists in the Old Testament, New Testament and the Quran. But unlike Paul saying treat your slaves well, the Quran says the best way to get to God is to free your slaves so already within the Quranic tradition is that there is an evolution happening here that slavery is not a healthy state because any time a human being is in an indignant state it is bad because there is anger and resentment and all these things. That is why the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "do not say my slave my slave, all of you are slaves to God" so the idea of slavery was abolished in that hadith and what it becomes is a type of indentured servitude that needs to be worked out.

So that is the first type of Islam and it is the Islam of natural order, the Islam of the laws of the universe. There are laws in the universe and they work and they are understandable and certainly the earth all these things happening on the planet, blossom coming out, this is Islam. Those trees are in a state of submission. Hibernation, the act that animals know when to hibernate. The fact that squirrels know when to start collecting nuts and things for the winter. Who taught them that? That is Islam, he is in a state of submission to his nature. So the idea of human beings, we submit, it is painful, we do not do it willingly. See the squirrel does it willingly. Human beings do it with difficulty. It is a difficult thing and amongst them are those who do it completely out of desire and love. The second type of Islam is the Islam of the Prophetic tradition. The idea that

all Prophets have been Muslims. This is Old Testament, they talk about submitting to God. New Testament, submitting to Islam. Ibrahim said that “I am a Muslim, I am the first of those who are Muslim in submission”. Yaqoub said to his sons “what are you going to do after me?”. They said “we are going to worship one God and we will be Muslim. So Jacob and all these Jewish Prophets, they were all Muslims. Isa said “we are Muslim”. So there is that type of Islam and then the third type of Islam is the historical phenomena that we call Islam which emerges in the 7th century. That is Islam. The fourth type are the rules and regulations that were given to us, those things that we are told to do and those things we are told not to do. These are all mentioned in the Quran, these various types of Islam.

Now one of the things that the bedouin say, they mention in that hadith “amana” we believe and the bedouin were people who looked at the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and they watched him very closely and at a certain point they said “it looks like he is going to succeed in taking over the Arabian peninsula”. At that point they started joining because they wanted to be on the right side. So they came and said “amana”. The Quran said “do not say we believe, rather say we submit because imaan has not yet entered your hearts” so there can be an outward submission without an inward resignation and that is a danger. So now we move to the five pillars. The idea that we have to embody the book which means that we do what the book says, that is Islam. We believe the world view that the book presents which is imaan and then we intend our actions accordingly to the highest ideals of the religion which is ihsan. So it is described here by Dr Murata and Chittick as becoming flesh and blood. This is what really the five pillars are. It is beginning to live this reality.

Shahada

The first pillar is called shahada. This is actually one of my favourite words in Islam because the word shahada in Arabic means to testify, to witness. It has the idea of seeing but it also has the idea of the material world. Shahada, the Quran says “He is the knower of the seen and unseen worlds”. This whole world is called shahada which is very beautiful because essentially what the world is saying is “la ilaha illal Allah”. The world is the shahada because the world is telling humanity that there is no God but Allah, that everything you see in creation is testifying to this ultimate truth that behind all of this is a unified reality. It is the intelligence, the power and the will behind the entire universe and so the other interesting thing about this is the Quran says “we will continue to reveal to them our signs in the self and on the horizon until it becomes clear to them that this is true” and then Allah says a really interesting thing “isn't it enough that your

Lord is witnessing everything?”. This is interesting because there are many many philosophers and only recently the physicist like Neil Borens was the first physicist to say this that “Material and substantial reality is only real because it is witnessed” in other words the universe only has reality because of consciousness. Without consciousness there is no world so this idea of Allah being the One who witnesses all things. The fact that God is aware that the world exists and that is His Qaumiyyah and the moment that He removes that and that is why to turn away from it “there is no nodding with Allah and no sleep” because to do that there is no world, to turn away from one instant, it disappears. So that is the idea of shahada that the world is being witnessed by Allah and therefore when we partake in that witnessed this is what we are doing. We are giving the world its true reality. We are saying “la ilaha ill Allah” that we are witnessing too and this is what Allah says “Allah witnesses that He is One” so we are sharing in the experience of consciousness and that is something really extraordinary. That is the gift that humans have been given. That is why we are taken to account so ruthlessly. It has to be that way I mean thank God it is not that ruthless, there is a lot of mercy there, that is why we are told “My reckoning is going to be great because what I have given you is so immense. I have given you all the tools, look in your own selves, do you not see what I have given you, sight, hearing, speech, will”. Those are attributes of God. These are what you learn in tawheed. Look at what I have given you. The problem is then people start thinking they are God and that is where man goes crazy. It is because they really believed it, that I can do without God, I don’t need God. It is the promethion in rebellion, the Titans, that is what happened in Greek mythology. Originally there was dahar (time). The original god was time and was time was overthrown by the Titans. It is interesting because it is very similar to the jinn story. The jinn go into rebellion and overthrow the authority of God and then it was given to Adam. It is very interesting that the ancient Greek mythology has a similar idea there that originally there was the real god which was time, space which is dahar. Allah says “do not curse time space because I am time space” which does not mean that this is God but it is very interesting that this hadith exists. Dahar in Arabic means time stretched out. That is the shahada and obviously when you say “there is no God but Allah” the means by which you arrived at that through certainty must be recognised because we are in a world of means and that is why saying “Muhammadur Rasulullah” is gratitude to that means. That is why filial piety is the second greatest way of displaying gratitude to God, is gratitude to your parents. “That you should show gratitude to Me and then your parents”. This is the same as tawheed. First you witness that there is no God but Allah or the One God but then you witness that this man taught me this with certainty and that is why you say “wa ashadu anna Muhammadur Rasulullah” or “Isa Rasulullah” if you were in his time or “Moses Rasulullah” whoever the Prophet was but for us it is the Prophet and we should be grateful for that. Our time is the time which the Prophet which includes all of the previous Prophets. When we say “Muhammadur Rasulullah” we are saying Jesus Rasul, Moses Rasulullah, Abraham was a messenger of God, Noah, Yahya, they are all in that statement. So that is the shahada and obviously there is a lot to go but they deal a lot with it in imaan so I will finish there.

Prayer

The second pillar after the shahada is called prayer or salah and again there are different types of prayer. It is interesting that in the Quran and this is brought out here, the thing that is commanded more than other human activity in the Quran is prayer, salah. Also the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "the prayer is the imad of this religion". It is the central pole or pillar that holds the tent up. The traditional bedouin tents had four pegs on each side and then they had a central peg so the idea here is that the four other pillars, the shahada, zakah, fasting, hajj are these other pillars but the prayer is really what is giving this tent its real reality so prayer is at the essence.

The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "prayer is the bone marrow of worship" and it is really interesting from a physiological point of view to describe it as the bone marrow because the bone marrow is the core and that is what it means. The Arabs say the core of something but the bone marrow is really what gives birth to the blood, it generates blood. It also generates the defense system or the immune system. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) in another hadith said "prayer is the weapon of the believer" so the idea that the prayer is like the immune system of the body and that is why the Quran says that God does not punish a people that pray, that are calling on God so one prayer is the salatullah, that He prays on you so Allah and His prayer is mercy. His mercy is called salah. It is the same word that is used but it has a different meaning but it is still considered salah.

Then there is everything that is in the heaven and earth that is praying so there is this prayer of creation. The Quran says "everything is in a state of glorification". In verse 24:41, "have you not see that everyone in the heavens and earth glorifies God, the birds spreading their wings, each one knows its prayer and its glorification" so each one of the things in creation has a prayer, a salah and it has a tasbih. When we pray, what do we do immediately after the prayer? SubhanAllah, Alhamdulillah and that is tasbih. So we have salah and in the prayer you are doing your tasbih as well "Subhanna Rabbi Ala". So salah and tasbih, the idea of having a means to glorify God and that is what essentially the prayer is. It is the means by which we have been given.

The third type is the prayer that all Prophets have been given. Every Prophet was given a prayer, it might not look the same. That is why different religions have different outward forms of

praying because just like different animals have different forms in which they do worship different communities have been given different forms. Allah says” We gave every ummah its own form, its own law and the way it which it goes”. Obviously things are similar which is one of the reasons why in most traditions there is some form of praying with the hands and these type of things, you will see similarities but they do not have to be the same to be a prayer.

Finally there is a specific prayer which is the ritual that the Muslims do and it is the second pillar of Islam. So those are the different types of prayer. That prayer is divided into two. Now that prayer is done five times a day which is interesting also because 5 is an interesting number obviously. We have 5 finger and 5 toes on each side of our hands. You can say why 5 and ultimately those type of things are irrational not that they are crazy but they are not something that our rational minds can arrive at. I am somebody that does not like to go into numerology, it is not because I think numbers do not have a reality but numerology is a kind of path to insanity and that is traditionally the way that Muslim have looked at it. So numbers do have a reality, do not think they are not significant, they are very significant but generally we do not like to go there but I will make a few remarks about 5.

There are five pillars in Islam. There are five prayers in Islam. There are five rulings in every action. Every action falls into one of five categories. Five is a very interesting number. It is the first number that occurs as a sum of an even and an odd. So you have after one which is the divine number and belongs to Allah alone. Allah’s number is One. That is why Wahid is the first number and Ahad is not. One is God’s number but if you look at two and three, it is the even and the odd. “By the even and the odd”, Allah swears by the even and the odd. The even and the odd is also represented in the male and female. So the coming together of these two numbers produces five. It is an interesting number and we do pray five times a day.

The quintessence is the fifth nature which is the spirit, the ruh, because you have the four elements which we are composed of which is earth, water, fire and air. Then you have the quintessence which was the fifth essence, which is the spiritual essence which permeates the world. So we pray five times a day, three of those prayers are in when the sun is not visible and two of them are when the sun is visible. So they are divided by night and day. They are also done according to the movements of the sun which again is harmonising with the world so the idea of watching the sun. If you get up before dawn, Muslim should do that. You should have been up this morning if you pray, you should have been up before the sun went up just to see that every morning is something spectacular, just to go out and look at that phenomenon of the breaking of

dawn, and what that means and then watching that sun move across and becoming aware of this movement that is occurring every day because one of the things about modern human beings is that they are so out of sync with reality just with nature I mean people are completely isolated. Food comes in packages. They do not experience the earth anymore. People live in cities that are all just cement and skyscrapers block out the sky. There a lot of people that do not even know that the sun traverses the sky everyday. They are not even aware of that fact. These astronomical centres get called all the time where people are horrified that they saw the moon during the daytime and they want to know why the moon is out in the daytime. I read that in an astronomy book where people just see the moon for the first time in the daytime and “what is it doing up there in the sky? That is only supposed to come out at night”. So this is the type of detachment that people have and I remember being in New Mexico with a group of inner city youth who had never been outside of new York or New Jersey and that night when the stars came out, they were in shock. They were literally in shock. One of the things that Emmerson said was “if the stars only came out every thousand years how would we even know how to adore God”. That is part of what the stars are about. That is why Ibrahim who is the father of the anbiya, what is the first thing that he does? He was kept according to one tradition in a sirdab for 12 years, he never saw the light of the day. When he was 12, he came out and it was his first experience of the world and he saw the stars and he said “this is my Lord” then he saw the moon and said “no this is my Lord”. They kept setting and then he saw the sun “this must be it” and then it set and he said “I do not love things that set”. In other words he knew that God was the One who did not set. So the ulema say it is using the starts to prove the existence of God that the order of the heavens is one of the ways of understanding that God is real. That is something guarantee you that studying the stars will increase your imaan. Just going out looking at them, watching them, just thinking about them.

So during those prayers and obviously we have a rakah. I am going to show you something and this is not mine, it is one of the Egyptian scholars Imam Sawhi points it out in one of his aqeedah books. Scholars call this milah. One of the things that he said is the word Ahmad is the form of prayer, that you have a standing position and then a bowing position and then a prostrating position, sitting position. He said also it is in Adam’s name which is the standing, bending, sitting and sajdah. So the letters, the human being has been designed to pray.

One of the things you can notice when you do wudu is that you are designed, the wudu works perfectly. I mean if you watch, if you do wudu, you will realise that all of your limbs are made to do this. Each one of these positions of prayer and that is why you do not go down, you stop where it is natural to stop, as you go further down it begins to hurt, if you try to go any further

you will feel the pain of that. Then the sajdah, the going down on all seven limbs. This is very interesting as well of putting, everything goes down. Sitting as well, sitting position so each one of these positions, the prayer confirms with the body perfectly and these are natural positions to do. Part of the reason why in Islam you pray is because your body should be sharing in the worship of God so the body itself is participating. You do not just sit and meditate, it is not in your head. Your body is actually worshipping with you and this removes this dualistic mind-body separation. It is very profound and really if you are on a strong path you will spend your life perfecting it and mastering it. You will never reach the ultimate prayer, and that is why the prayer is something that must be done every day five times a day until you die because one of the things about kadas, when you do a kada, the reason why they have to do them everyday is not just to keep on remembering the but to perfect them. Mastery in a martial art is a lifetime experience and every martial art, I don't care if he has reached, he will admit to you, I am not as good as my teacher, I still have not perfected this. They are always working on that perfection. That is the thing about the prayer. It is a lifetime commitment. So that is why if you are doing it the same way every day. You are missing the point. You have fallen into a perfunctory routine. You have gone to sleep. That the prayer should be a commitment, it is a lifetime commitment to the mastery of the art of communicating with God.

Chapter 3

Now obviously you have in Islam you purify your self before you do it and that is preparation for entering into this state like the ihram before Hajj. You are going into a scared space and you want to prepare for that space. The wudu is a way and wudua comes from brightness because the face will be luminous on the day of judgment and the arms and limbs from wudu. Wudua means to be luminous and bright. They said to the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) how will you know your followers? He said "they will be like the piebald horse". You know how these horses have white, they are brown but they have white on their face and then the front and hind are all white, this is how he describes his followers. He said "from the effects of wudu". Again what you are doing is preparing yourself for something that occurs in the next world which is the luminosity of practice. This is why if you have ever met anybody that has mastered anything, it has affected their being. I do not care if they are a master pianist, a master ballerina, whatever it is, you will see that they will have qualities that you do not find in ordinary human beings. I guarantee you, it does not matter what the mastery is. You will find that a committed practice to something in which a person has done it religiously every day, it has an effect on their character. That is why the highest thing that you can do is to work on perfecting your soul, on your heart, on your experience of the world as a theatre of divine manifestation. So that is what prayer is

about and water is a purifying element. It is an outward element but it is the purest thing that we know of in the world. We talk about it in our language in metaphors “it was crystal clear, it was clear as water”.

Then the adhan which is another amazing thing because it is so extraordinary that other religions have these calls. The Jews call with the ram’s horn, the Christians have the bell. How did the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) through a dream, different people saw it, Bilal was one of them, they saw to call with the human voice, people to pray. Not to use anything artificial but to use the voice itself to call people to the prayer. Then saying Allah is Greater, I bear witness that there is no God but Allah, I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God and then hurry to prayer, hasten to prayer, hasten to falah, falah is harvest, that is what falah is. So what you are coming to is a harvest. That is what prayer is. You are reaping the benefit of the day because the day was made for prayer. If you miss the harvest you have missed the point of the day. It is just like somebody who has planted seeds all spring and then when the summer comes, it is time to harvest, they don’t go and they don’t harvest what they planted. So what was the point? The same as being in the world, the point of being in the world is this practice and that is why never belittle the reality of the prayer, the prayer is the most important thing you will do in your life as a constant practice. You should be committed to perfecting your prayer and it is a struggle. It is a struggle to be committed to wakefulness, to be committed to doing your wudu correctly all these things. Some people can see it as tedious but the beauty of practice and every master knows this is that the proof is in the pudding like the English say. The better you get, the more important the prayer becomes.

That is why the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said to Bilal “give our soul repose by calling is to the prayer O Bilal”. He said his repose was in his prayer and he said “the coolness of my eye is in prayer”. The Arabs use the coolness of the eye as cold tears are tears of joy. Hot tears are painful tears. Cool tears are the joyful tears so what he was saying was that the joy of my life is in my prayer. Prayer was not something that was dreadful to him. Adeb al Hatim said “from the time I became Muslim I never heard the adhan except I was yearning for the time. From the time he became Muslim, he never heard the adhan and thought “O I gotta pray now”. Anybody who does prayer seriously you thank God for that, just that stopping. So the prayer is a gift and people that really practice it, you cannot imagine it. Even though I went for 18 years without doing the Muslim prayer, since I became Muslim I have never missed a prayer. I could not imagine not praying. I could not imagine it. I couldn’t, it is just something I could not imagine being deprived of prayer would be like deprived of breathing. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) in his beautiful description points out the prayers effect. The Prophet

(sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “tell me, if one of you had a river at his door and he washed in it five times a day, would any of his filthiness remain?”. They said “nothing of his filthiness would remain”. He said “that is the likeness of the prayer of five times a day, God obliterates wrongs with it”. So that is the part of going back to prayer. So that is the prayer, there is a lot of verses in the Quran to use the prayer as a way of taking succor and help from Allah.

Zakat

The third pillar is zakat and zakah is purifying the wealth. So just as you need to purify your body with wudu, you purify your soul with prayer, you have property in the world and that property needs to be purified and zakah comes from a root word which means to purify. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “zakah is the faeces of wealth”, that is what he called it. He said that is why Bani Hashim does not take zakat because zakat is the impurities, it is fertiliser. What faeces is, is fertiliser and the animal has to get rid of faeces in order to stay healthy and pure so zakah is a way of keeping your wealth healthily. The miser and the one constipated is the same word in Arabic, mumsik. So a person who is a miser is constipated and they get sick spiritually. Their wealth is actually causing their soul to get sick and in giving out it is letting go and that is why it is not a Freudian insight, this idea that he called anally retentive personality which one of the symptoms of that person was to be a miser and that was Freud. It is not a Freudian insight that is the Arabic language. The word for pure gold and muconian stool is the same. So his insight about gold and faeces being the same, the ancient Arabs knew that because it is in their language. That is what it is and the Prophet said in Imam Ahmad's musnad “Allah has made that which comes out of the Son of Adam a metaphor for the world” and the meaning of that is the reason that you eat is not necessarily because you need to eat, part of it is the enjoyment of eating but everything you eat ends up in the toilet and that is the nature of the world. The world has all these beautiful aspects but at the end of the day it is a world that is in annihilation. It is going to rot and we will leave it just as the people before us left it and ultimately everybody has to leave it. So do not get too caught up in it, see it for what it is.

Now this is a really important point on page 16 which just this idea of zakah that you do not pay zakah unless you are healthy financially and the insight that they derive from that is that it is a typical example of how Islam sets up priorities. In other words you do not give zakat until you are able to do that so in those things that pertain between you and God, everybody has to do that but when it is you and society you only do what you are able to do and the reason for that is you need to take care of yourself before you can take care of the world and there is a beautiful

metaphor in that because we have all these social activists that want to save the world and their own personal lives are a mess. So the idea of trying to save the world and your own soul is in jeopardy. It means your priorities are wrong and so the idea of zakah, it means you start taking care of others when you have taken care of yourself. That is when you need to start thinking about other people but if you are still in a mess do not try to help other people. Religious well being demands that they accept some measure of social responsibility so zakah has this idea of social responsibility. One of the reasons that the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “a person who marries has completed half of his religion” so then to look to the other half because if the family is healthy the society is healthy. When the society is well, it is as a result of the family being well. The same is true for wealth. If your own house is intact then you can help other houses.

Fasting

The fourth pillar is fasting. It is fasting the month of Ramadhan. Obviously the lunar calendar has about 355 days, each month lasts 29 or 30 days and you can do it according to the crescent moon sighting. Now I want to just look a moment at the idea of looking for a crescent moon and refer you to what you could call a phenomenological astronomer. Someone who is interested in astronomy for the phenomena and not for the theoretical aspect of it. I would just like to read something. This is a Scottish man who is not a Muslim. He says something very interesting and it just strikes me that so many Muslims do not seem to see this. When I read this, it just articulated exactly how I have always felt about the point of looking at the moon and what significance that has for us.

He said “of prime importance is the determination of the start of the holy month of Ramadhan a time of fasting and devotion but Muslim communities have a habit of starting their celebrations on different days in any one year due to the varying locations and sky conditions for sighting the crescent moon. Places lying westwards of where the crescent moon can first be seen from the earth have a better chance of seeing it, the movement of the sun and moon is westwards and more time elapses before they arrive at the horizons of these places. For the moon to move out of the sun’s light at the start of its monthly journey, also some latitudes will have the zodiac standing at a deeper more visible angle to the horizon than others. That is the belt in which the moon travels. Then there are delays caused by weather, under good conditions it is possible to sight a first crescent less than 24 hours after a new moon. 15 hours is the least. There is a record

of 13 hours but it would be very rare. But it is a common sight to see it 30 hours after. To increase the Islamic observers chances, two independent witnesses are required. The Ottomans decreed that the first sighting can be made with the naked eye or a telescope”. Now listen to this. “there are efforts to standardise the Islamic calendar so that Ramadhan is started on the same day in various communities but the relationship of celestial bodies to the earth is a living thing and every location has its own sky so why shouldn’t religious festivals begin on dates peculiar to particular places? The modern mind wishes to generalise and abstract the situation so the phenomena are by passed. As with the length of the day the average is calculated and becomes the accepted truth to accommodate the limits of circular wheels and clocks yet none of the celestial bodies move in circles”.

So what he is saying is you put all your averages in and you will get this average and it will all work out, you can make your little calendar and it all works perfectly but that is not nature. People forget that a 24 hour day period, that is not real time, that is our standard time. Real time is 23 hours and 56 minutes that is what a day is. So the idea of going out and looking at the moon is connecting the earth with nature. I think it is really interesting that before you pray you use water and if you don’t have water you use earth. It is like touch the world. Touch these things, feel them. You know how children, one of the things they love to touch mud and get in there. They love to do that, why do they like to do that? Because they are still connected with that. The word is very real to them. We become so abstracted, so these things are bringing us back to these basic elements of which we are composed, earth and water, prayer, movement. Get in your body, people behind a desk all day never stopping. Watch a cat. A cat could not sit behind a desk all day long. They are not insane. They have to move, they have to experience, they have to feel that, that is what they have to do. That is why cats do that. Then they do their wudu. They have to do all those things. They even do the wiping over the head. Have you ever watched them do that? That is what they are doing, they are in there. All these animals, watch them, watch animals. People forget that the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) had goats in his yard, we knew that he used to go out and milk them. He drank milk that came out of an udder. Have you ever had milk directly out an udder? Really I mean that is what Hakim is always asking people about that stuff. Have you experienced nature? That is what going out and looking at the moon. Look at the moon. Have you ever seen a new moon born? It is called wilada. It just comes into existence. It is an incredible thing to witness and when you see it there is this thing that happens within you SubhanAllah that is what happens and that is why Allah is saying go out and look at that because I made that and that is a sign of My existence. Go out and look at it and say SubhanAllah. Feel that because that is reality. That is you as a conscious creature with this gift of consciousness experiencing the Creator’s world that He made for your consciousness. He has put it all together so that you could experience it because nobody else can. We are unique. That is the gift He gave us and that is what it is about. That is what Fasting, Ramadhan is – lunar. Why do

we have lunar calendars? Here they have caesarean sections, they do not want natural birth. It makes it so easy because I have my golfing appointment and then at 11am and I just go and do the op but children do not come out at 11am. They come out whenever they want, they come out when they are ready, they come out when Allah decrees for them to come out but modern mind wants to fix it all. That is if you look at arial cities of the Islamic world they look like cells. They literally look like living cells. Look at Fez, look at pictures of Fez and look at modern cities with all their perfectly straight streets. You go into Muslim cities and it is all corners and curves because that is the world, that is how the world is. It is not all straight lines, straight lines are abstractions in the mind but that is what the modern mind wants to do, to impose its reality on an already existing reality. That is why it is living in a delusional state because reality is not like that. Islam is about experiencing reality as it is. “O Allah show me things as they are” not as my filters project them to be. That was a dua of our Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) “show me things as they are”. That is Islam. Fasting is part of that. Look at what fasting does. Allah says “We decreed fasting for you in order for you to learn how to discipline your souls and make them pure”.

Now one of the things about fasting is that things that are normally permitted are suddenly prohibited. What does that do to things that are prohibited? They become extra prohibited and suddenly you aware of backbiting in a way that you are not aware of it during the rest of the year. Suddenly you are aware of looking at somebody lustfully in a way that you were not aware of it because you think “O my God I am fasting”. In other words, what is normally permissible is now prohibited and it makes the normally prohibited seem very very real and so it is a discipline of your soul. It is teaching you how to have taqwa. It is about purification of the body and soul. The body is here and it is real, do not ignore your body. Bodies are real, they are real. Allah made them it is such a great gift to be in the body and we should take care of the body. Be good to the body because the body is good to us.

That is why the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “your body has a right over you”. Non-Muslims look at fasting as this incredibly difficult thing, for Muslims it is the best time of the year because it is the time when they are closest to Allah. That is why, they are in a state of worship despite themselves. Just by sitting there, sleeping, they are worshipping because they are fasting. That is why even the sleep of a faster is worship and that is why you feel good in Ramadhan. You might not feel physically good but you feel spiritually good. So it is this beautiful proof every year. Another thing that he points out is that is beautiful is the justice of God. If you live in the UK, half the year you are going to be fasting really short periods and the other half really long periods but over a 33 year period which is the total cycle it will work out to

the same amount of fasting that the people in the middle part of the world so everybody ends up fasting the same amount of time all throughout the world.

Hajj

Every religion has this idea of pilgrimage and it is the setting out on that journey and here it is a physical journey with a metaphysical destination. It is a physical journey but the destiny is the House of God and God does not have a house in which He dwells. So He put a house there as a symbol of visiting God and you are a guest of God and that is why you are called the guest of the Merciful. He put a rock there which He called the right hand of God that you can go kiss in the same way that if you visit a king you would kiss the right hand of the king so the rock there is symbolic of paying homage to the benevolent monarch, benevolent king of whom you are subject. Obviously it is also a recognition. One of the things about going to Mecca is suddenly all these things that you have heard about are real. The Kabah is real. The places where the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) walked become real. Jabal Thawr is real. You are walking in the footsteps of Prophet Abraham and his greatest son Muhammad and that is part of what the Hajj is, it is connecting you with the footsteps of these great human beings, that were in a state of complete submission. It is about submission.

Then also the gift of visiting the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). That he is there, he is amongst us, you can go visit him. There is no other Prophet in the planet that anybody can go visit with any certainty. The Jews cannot go and visit Moses. No one can go and visit Isa. They can't visit. This is a great gift that Muslims have been given, that their Prophet is there physically in Madinah. He according to the hadith actually returns greeting so this a real visit with a response and for people who have been there and been in the right state, they know what they tasted there, they know. You can go in with different states. There are people who go in there and do not see anything. There are other people who go in there and they are wading in light. Some people are not wading they are engulfed in it. Other people that is all they can see. There are many different visits to Madinah.

Now he talks about the sixth pillar. This is a Shia concept. He studied in Iran and there is where you kind of notice, I think he is very fair. I know William Chittick studied in Iran so I know he is very familiar with the Shia tradition. The Shia traditionally considered jihad as the sixth pillar. He said some authorities. This is not a Sunni concept although Imam Malik does put it in acts of

worship not in acts of transactions whereas other imams put it in transactions. There is a separation and then there is a restoration. There is a separation. Obviously the soul has a reality and Imam Malik described it as, and it is the best description we have “the soul is to the body what moisture is to the tree” in other words it is what animates the body so in that way we are vitalists. The Chinese also adhered to that, the idea of Chi, that there is this non-descript, non-quantitative force working in the body. What I was talking about was consciousness, the idea of separating consciousness. There is a duality in Western tradition of the mind-body spirit that comes from Descartes which is why Descartes said for instance that animals did not feel any pain even if it sounded like they did because they did not have a consciousness so you could just dissect living animals and do not be bothered by the screams of agony. We need to be in our bodies. A lot of people are not in their bodies. They check out of their bodies. They become disembodied and you actually go into a type of psychotic condition where you are completely disembodied so it is very important, that is part of why we pray in our bodies because it keeps us in our bodies.

One of the most important ways to keep in our bodies is to learn the outward rules of salah very well and to adhere to them in the same way you would when you first learn to drive. When you first learn to drive, it is very troublesome because you are so conscious of the rules especially if you have the teacher next to you but at a certain point it all becomes “it is just what you do”. So initially being obsessed with the rules is problematic because you are so focused on the rules you cannot focus on the spirit of the prayer but that is a necessary stage of the prayer so learning the rules really well until they become second nature and then you begin to work on your spiritual presence of the prayer. Part of that has to do with the amount of dhikr that you do during the day and that is why the more dhikr you do, the better your prayer. Also wudu is very important. Sidi Ahmad Zarruq said “your presence in your wudu determines your presence in your prayer”. One of the things that people do is that they do wudu very hastily and very ritualistically so their wudu is no longer an act of worship.

One of the best things that I was ever exposed to was watching Muratul Hajj do wudu because it really hit home the first time I saw it. It is a deep act of worship and we tend to forget that. Wudu is part of prayer. It is a very deep act of worship. Not doing wudu in a bathroom, no doing it where the toilet is very important. One of the things that Sidi Ahmad Zarruq was saying before you start your prayer recite Surah Naas just to remove the waswasa.

It is one of the proofs of Iblis because like when you do takbir sometimes, it is the weirdest thing, why did that suddenly come into my mind? That is that component that is working. It is very interesting. Literally you do takbir and waswasa comes. Tasawuf is on the words that is used to describe the science of ihsan. It is the inner fiqh. So that is all it is, it is an inner fiqh. Just like you have fuqaha that are wrong in their outward rules you have people of tasawuf that are wrong in their inward. That is part of the problem. People throw the baby out with the bathwater because there are people of tasawuf that went way out there. Then you have extremist fuqaha.

What I was going to say was in the West one of the reasons that you have so much perversion in sexuality is because people are so removed from their bodies. Sex becomes a very mental thing. Their experiences of sex is all mental. It is a disease, they want perverse sex because they cannot just experience a natural experience of being in the body. Very strange. You do not have that in traditional cultures where people are very much in their body. You do not have perverted sex. I guarantee you, in Mauritania, they cannot even understand it. They cannot, they just do not understand it. They do not even understand sodomy. One faqih told me that when he went to the Emirates when he was studying in Mauritania, he used to be really troubled by all this stuff: paedophilia and sodomy in the books of fiqh. He thought it was really strange and he thought it was all the theoretical possibilities that fuqaha were trying to exhaust all the possibilities. He did not think it was in the world. He thought that the people of Lut was a group of people and that was it until he went to the East and then he got a real shock but that is Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people tend not have those types of perversions.

In the hadith, why are the pillars described before faith?

Obviously the first rukun of Islam is shahada and that comes out of faith. So faith in a sense precedes Islam but you can enter into Islam and your faith is very immature and undeveloped. Faith is something that comes out of practice. It is developed through practice if the practice is done properly. There are some Muslim countries, I do not want to mention names but there are some Muslim countries where hypocrisy is the norm. Where people do these outward ritual which have no impact on their spiritual reality at all. You see the most horrendous examples of hypocrisy in people that pray, fast and do everything so it is no guarantee any of it.

During the Mamluke period, slaves actually became rulers so they saw that as a fulfillment of that prophecy.

Riyaa which is spiritual showing off. It is doing an act of devotion in other words to God hoping that people see it for whatever reason. Riyaa is definitely more significant in a spiritual society. We have showing off, if somebody is a good horseman and they see people, they do a fancy jump, that is not riyaa. That is just showing off. Riyaa is when you do an act that should be done for God that you are doing for other people to say “what a generous person”. That is riyaa. There are two types of riyaa. That which is only for the people which is the worst type. In other words, you do not even care about God, you give charity so people will say “he is a generous man”. The other is when you genuinely want to do something for God but you find this desire. That is something that people have to struggle with. Imam Malik was asked about a man who was on his way to the mosque who when he set out solely for the sake of God but on the way he is hoping somebody might see him. Imam Malik said it is human nature that that element exists.

There is the famous story of a man who used to go to prayer and he was in the first line every single day for 40 years. One day he went and he missed the opening takbir and he did not want people to see him. He realised he had had that riyaa for 40 years. I do not know if that is true or not but the meaning is nice. It is just letting you know that there is a lot of subtle levels there that we are not even aware of. That is part of spiritual development. That is why they say “the good actions of righteous people are wrong actions for the people in divine presence”. That is why each maqam that you move to you start saying astagfirullah for the previous maqam because you realise how many things you were doing wrong, how many things that you thought you were doing were right. You get to a higher level of awareness, you realise “I was doing it for the wrong reason”. It is a journey, that is why it is called a path. It is a journey. May Allah help us to realise the right one.

I wanted to go over some concepts for people to understand about jihad because probably of all the topics related to Islam the two most common misconceptions I would say are probably those concerning jihad and those concerning women. Most of the attacks on Islam generally tend to focus on those two elements so I would like to talk about this first from what he mentions in this book. He mentions the idea of holy war as misleading and it is inaccurate translation. Holy war in Arabic if you did have a word for it, the Arabs actually do not, would be Harb Muqasada. The Arabs do not have a concept of holy war in that way, in fact it is actually a Christian concept and coming out of the just war concept and crusades. So the word in Arabic that is used and has in fact become an English word sometimes with a negative connotation and other times with a positive, it has been used both ways by journalists and other people.

Jihad comes from a root word which is juhud which has the idea of exerting energy. “He exerted his utmost ability” so the idea behind the word jihad and juhud is known as a verbal noun from jahada wa jahidu. The Quran says “Struggle against them with it, with the Quran a great jihad, a great struggle” which means argue with the polytheists using the Quran as the weapon of argumentation against polytheism because the Quran although it never proves the existence of God it is constantly focusing on the unity of God. So the idea was to use the arguments that the Quran presents for the oneness of God in order to explain to the people who believed in more than one god that there was one God so that is a type of jihad in the Quran. That is a great jihad, that is why the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and the Quran says “struggle with them, with your wealth, with yourselves” and also it says to the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) “to fight with them with your tongues” in other words argumentation. In fact argumentation not being disputation but rather civil debate, civil discourse because the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) if a conversation became heated he would withdraw. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) did not engage in disputation but rather in civil debate or discourse where we sit down and try to look at a problem from both sides and so you put your proofs forward, the other person puts his proofs forward and you attempt to convince somebody of a superior way. That is a civil discourse and that is jihad bil lisaan. The Quran says “and dispute with them in an excellent way” which is civil discourse using intelligence and using reason. Now the interesting thing is that war is actually when that breaks down in other words coercive force is what is used when people are not able to speak to each other in any civil way so war is actually a collapse of intelligent discourse. That is why in essence it is a very stupid thing. War is an incredibly stupid thing and that is why the Quran tells us not to be aggressors because the nature of the aggressor is he is somebody who is unable to obtain what he wants so he resorts to other ways, violent means to getting what he wants. Those type of people usually want wrong things, things that are not theirs and that is why the essence of conflict generally has to do with one person or one group of people aggressing on another group of people. So what happens is one side if is aggressed on and the other side is the aggressors. The people who are aggressed upon are the people in the Quran that are permitted to fight and this is why at the essence of physical or martial conflict and that is why when we look at jihad, there are three Quranic concepts.

The first is struggling against the self. The idea that there is an internal conflict going on so actually have to struggle with your self and part of struggling with yourself is struggling with the passions and the passion are your bestial nature. So your struggle with that is your reason and that is why when somebody is attempting not to do something that is wrong and struggle against those impulses, what he is using a higher power and the higher power, is the aql. That is why the essence of intellect in Arabic means that which constrains you or that which prevents you from doing some thing that will lead you astray. Aql yaquli means to stop, to prevent and other Arabic word that they use for intellect is nuha which comes from that which refuses or that which

prevents yanha. So the essence of the intellect is that it prevents a human being from going astray. Now those people that do not listen to intellect, Allah says about them “they are like animals” but then He says “they are even more astray”. The reason for that is that animal do not do things that harm them. If an animal knows there is harm in something, it will avoid it. If an animal sees fire, it will flee from the fire. If an animal sees something that threatens it, it will either defend itself if it does not see any other venue or if by its nature the threat that it deems within its power like a lion if it is threatened by a lesser animal, the lion will tend to fight because it knows it can overpower.

So the idea of human beings resorting to the bestial element in itself is a capitulation, it is the idea of surrendering the self to something that is low and that is why if you look at the human body itself the higher organs, the heart and the intellect are an upper body and the lower organs the stomach and the genitals are upon the lower body. So the idea is that this is the way that the human being should be. He should be the ruling force, in the human being should be the heart and intellect and the subjugated force should be the bestial nature. What happens with human beings is that they become overcome by their bestial nature and so hunger and craving which is the essence of desire overwhelms the intellect so they begin to want things that are harmful for them. This is why they are worse than animals because an animal will only take what it needs. Lions do not go out and slaughter, they take what they need and they leave the rest maybe for another day but if they are not hungry they are not going to kill 10 zebras. They will kill what they need to kill and that is the difference between a human, the predations of humans are not needs. So when a predator animals attacks another animal it attacks out of need not out of want or desire. So this is very different. There is only a few animals that appear to be unprovoked. Sharks will attack unprovoked and so will certain snakes as well. There are a few snakes and there is a baboon that will attack unprovoked but it is very rare in the animal kingdom for an animal to attack unprovoked.

All creatures that have emotion and intellect, humans beings, have a self defence mechanism. It is part of human nature to defend yourself. If you fall your reaction is to put your arm out, you do not fall on your face. Human beings will not do that. In fact one of the first things they teach you in martial arts is to fall properly because you tend to want to put your hand out and break your wrist. So they teach you to learn how to fall in a way that is not actually going to harm you but the impulse is to brace yourself, is to defend yourself. The same if somebody begins to attack the thing to do is to cover your face, to protect your face. If somebody throws a blow at you, if you just stand there and do not defend yourself something is wrong with your nervous system. It is not functioning so self defence is a human, it is actually ingrained in us to defend ourselves and that

is why every civil law on the planet recognises the right to self defence. There is no law that does not whether it is a Muslim or non Muslim every law recognises that a human has the right to defend himself from bodily harm, from harm to property all of these things. The first jihad is that struggle against the self and this is what makes a human being human. Bahani says that a human being...there are two words in the Quran used for human, one is bashar and the other is insaan. A bashar, it is that quality that distinguishes us from other animals so for instance birds are distinguishable from their feathers. Birds have feathers. Mammals have fur. If you look at mammals, they have fur. Human beings have skin. That is why we are called bashar. Bashar is from bashara which means skin. So the human is when you say he is a bashar you say he is a man. That is when the Prophets, what do they say about the Prophets, that say “you are just a human like us” but they are not saying insaan, they are saying bashar.

All of us share basharia but we do not all share insaaniyah in truth just as an act of generosity from God that He calls us insaan. What Ragab says if you can imagine a dog standing on its two legs as opposed to four and talking in a language then you can imagine the state that many humans beings are in. That they only share their humanity in the form not in reality and there is a verse in the Quran “We have enobled the children of Adam” and that ennoblement is that we have been placed in this incredible noble form, we are not like animals, we do not walk on all fours, we do not have to go down to a plate, we take things up to our mouths. I do not have to go down and lick and lap up my water like a dog that I actually have this ability to feed myself. All these qualities that the human being has been given so acquiring virtuous qualities or noble qualities is actually a difficult thing. It takes time, it is not something that human beings are born with. Compassion is something that needs to be nurtured now some people you will have this naturally. It is something that Imam Ghazali mentions and other great scholars that there are some people who have virtuous qualities by nature. There are other people who do not. You will see in children, some children want to share things, other children refuse completely to share things and will become belligerent if they are made to share things. They have to learn. There are children that beat other children. There are other children that could not do that and would feel terrible about that. Now these qualities tend to be the more aggressive qualities in human beings are much more marked in men than they are in women and there is a reason for that as well. There is a reason why that even in their form they are less bestial than men. Women have certain qualities that are related to their biology and it has to do with the fact that they produce children. So there are certain qualities that are inherent just because they have the hormones. Some it is purely chemical and also it has to do with the fact that there is a womb raham and the essence of the womb is mercy. The word in Arabic raham, rahma are the same root words – the womb and mercy because the essence of mercy is in the womb. That is why Allah has derived the womb, He actually derived the womb from His name the Merciful. So the womb is derived from an attribute of God. That is what women have that men do not have. That is why the humanising

factor in societies are women. The mother is the humanising factor and without that if the mother is destroyed then it is a disaster for the rest of society.

So this idea of acquiring virtue to become a human being to achieve one's *insaaniyah* to achieve one's *insaaniyah* to achieve one's humanness is very difficult. That is a struggle.

At the root are four virtues. Courage, temperance, wisdom and then justice. These are the root virtues that human beings are meant to develop in their lives. All virtues come out of one of these four virtues. So courage which is the first and most important virtue because upon it the other ones are based. Generosity is actually the daughter of the mother virtue which is courage because generosity is courage with one's wealth. Patience is also a type of courage because it is a lack of anxiety when a calamity afflicts you and that is from a type of courage. So being patient is rooted in courage so courage in English, courage the root word is core which is heart. The essence of courage is the heart and so somebody who has courage has a lot of heart and that is why the Arabs when they say in West Africa "he does not have any heart" which means he does not have any courage. The heart is the source of courage. Then you have temperance which is a balance. Temper has to do with a balance. Temperature is a balance. Temperature, you adjust, so temper is the ability to adjust to different circumstances. So temperance is always maintaining a balance. It is like a homeostatic moral homeostasis. In the same way that your body maintains 98.6 the soul maintains a moderation in all things. That is the essence of temperance and from temperance comes chastity, *iffa* which has to do with not aggressing against anyone either sexually or financially.

From that it gives birth to contentment and from contentment, what comes from contentment is trustworthiness because somebody who has chastity and chaste used to mean not just with sexual mores, it has to do with everything now it is pretty much limited to the idea of temperance had to do with moderation in all things and that moderation lead to this chastity or chaste nature – a pure, virtuous nature. Then obviously from wisdom comes understanding. The virtues of the mind and intellect and then finally justice. At the essence of justice is a desire for fairness. The essence of justice is *insaaf* is fairness and it is very difficult. Very few people are fair in this world. Even people who are oppressors or who are oppressed will always look at the other with total lack of fairness, always. So an oppressor will always look at the one he is aggressing upon with a total lack of fairness. That is why true justice is very difficult to come about in the world because of human nature, it is so difficult for human beings to be fair to be truly fair.

The beauty of justice comes mercy. In the traditional understanding mercy came out of justice and the reason for that is an emotion that emerges when one sees somebody who is suffering or who is in a situation that he is not and from it arises this sense that this person does not deserve that. In other words, that fact that I am not in that condition, I do not want that condition for that person and that is justice. That is why mercy emerges out of justice. It is an extraordinary concept because we usually tend to see mercy and justice as mutually exclusive. You are either just or you are merciful but true mercy is actually emerging out of real sense of justice. That you do not observe that. That is why when God shows mercy to His creatures, that is coming from His justice. That is why the Quran says “my mercy outstrips my justice”. In other words, justice if the two race mercy always wins and from this idea of mercy emerging then the idea of forbearance.

Forebearance is the ability to despite somebody aggressing upon you, to actually have this forbearance, this ability not to desire retribution. From that virtue emerges, the virtue of forgiveness or pardoning, that is why that is the highest virtue. The amazing thing about forgiving, there was a really interesting study that was done in Stanford I think, they worked with these people that were in Ireland. They were Irish Catholics who had lost sons at the hands of Protestants or vice versa. In working with them most of these women were depressed and most of them were incredibly angry and having a lot of vengeful feelings. What they did was they worked with them to overcome that and to actually get to a place where they could actually forgive. What happened was they got better. They were able to get out of these depressive states. It is a type of acceptance and that is the beauty of forgiveness, there is that acceptance that there is nothing that can be done about it. Do I want to continue the cycle or do I want to be the one who breaks the cycle? That is mujahidah. That is what mujahidah is about. That is why the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said the real mujahid is the one who prevents his soul from things that are harmful for it. That is the reason. That is ancient Chinese. The Chinese said “the true voya is the one who conquers himself”.

This is ancient tradition. Now the second type of mujahidah is the mujahidah of shaytan. Shaytan in the Islamic tradition is a force that exists in the world. There is an obersive element within the soul, a whispering that comes into the soul and also outside of oneself. It has two forms: human shayateen and jinn shayateen. Shayateen al jinn are the demons that work within another realm. Just as we are here and can see each other. There are other creatures that love along side of us that have impact on our life and we have an impact on their life but we cannot see them, they can see us. Every culture in every civilisation has reference to them. There is no culture in that you can find, I don't care where, whether it is Japanese, if it is Indian, Russian, Irish no culture

except that it has reference to this realm. German the poltergeist, mischievous spirits and things like this. Japanese culture is filled with it. They are real and they do have an impact. The way that one struggles against them is by cleanliness, by maintaining vigilance and cleanliness – urine and faeces, wudu, ritual washing, things like this. This is why most cultures have some traditions that they ward off these elements. Some of the native American tribes would burn sage in south western parts of the country to remove these elements. Incense traditionally was one of the things because the idea was they do not like good smells. That is why incense is almost a universal phenomenon. You find incense in the Christian traditions, in the Shinto, Buddhist, the Islamic tradition. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “fumigate your mosques with incense”. That is part of why this is there and also wearing perfume is also a good thing. Not listening to these impulses in the self, everybody has them whether you call them obsessive compulsive thoughts, whatever people want to call them. Psychiatrists have words for them when they get out of hand, people start having auditory hallucinations. This is what they are called, auditory hallucinations. Muslims believe that they are real. You cannot deny their reality because there are people that experience and hear them. To say it is all in your head, well it might all be in your head but it is still there. So these guys walking around, you can see them. You go to some place and they are talking and shouting. They are having these battles going on and that is called majnun, somebody who is majnun.

Now the third type of jihad is the jihad which demands that you defend what is right. That is the jihad of the sword. There are many verses in the Quran that indicate this. It did not come down all at once. It came down for 13 years. The Muslims were not allowed to fight in Makkah. They were given no permission whatsoever. That is why they simply suffered silently. They did not fight, they did not oppose what was happening to them. That was very difficult for these Arab men, people like Abu Bakr, these were men who were raised in a tradition of murooha, shaj'ah, shahama, these virtues of the Arabs of strength bravery and magnanimity. So for them to watch people being persecuted in the way that they were watching and not able to do anything about it was incredible difficult. So that in itself was a test, not being able to fight was a big test. It is not the other way round but when the verse came down after 13 years the sahaba migrated to Madinah. Now at that point the difference now is that there is a state of authority and I am using the word state loosely. In other words I don't want to use state like it is understood in the modern concept of a state because that is not really what Madinah was but they did have power that was centralised and it was a city state in that way. So at that point they were permitted to fight. This was the first verse that came down permitting them to fight “permission has been granted for those who have been fought to fight because they were oppressed”. Now remember this is 13 years later, they were persecuted from the start but permission came when the circumstances changed. The idea of fighting when you do not have legitimate state authority is not permissible. It never has been. The Muslims have never viewed that. Permission to fight comes when you

have state authority. That does not mean an individual does not have the right to defend himself from being killed but if you look at the sahaba and the situations that they were in: some of them were tortured, some of them were killed. Sumayyah was stabbed with a spear, the first shahida, the first martyr in Islam. This was the first verse that came down and Allah said “those who were chased out of their homes without right for no other reason than saying my Lord is Allah”. Now this is really important because these are the two reasons that permission is granted to fight.

1. People who oppose your religion
2. People who steal your land

This is why Allah says in the Quran “Allah does not prevent you from showing kindness to people who have not opposed you in your religion or chased you out of your homes, to show them kindness, righteousness, to share your wealth with them and Allah loves those who are upright and just and fair”. Allah does not prevent Muslims from being kind to non Muslims but if they are fighting you in your right to worship your Lord and stealing your land and chasing you out of your homes then you have the right to fight them. That is the permission that is granted by Allah in the Quran. The second period is to fight the mushrikeen “fight those fisabilillah who fight you and do not be aggressive for Allah does not love the aggressors”. The ulema say that the fact that Allah does not love aggressors, you cannot change that. In other words the muhaba of Allah, the love of Allah is not fickle love. If Allah does not love aggressors, He does not love aggression in any time or place and so aggression is always wrong. That is why when Allah says that “fight those who fight you and do not show aggression”.

The next level Allah said “fight the polytheists completely just like they fight you completely”. Now this time because these people broke treaties with the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam), this is something very important to remember about the nature of war, that war occurs generally between two states. This is the nature of war. You can have what is called a civil war but in Islam that is called fitnah. What occurred between the Muslims and the mushrikeen was in a type of sense a fitnah and the reason for that is that they were one tribe. They were related by a shared father. Quraysh was the father of all the people in Makkah and for that reason Allah when they fought in the sacred month “they ask you about the sacred month” because the Arabs had four months that they never fought in. They asked about the sacred months, fighting in it because they had never heard of this. So Allah says “fighting in the sacred month is an enormity, it is a grave thing”. Preventing people from following their religion, disbelieving in what was given to them, rejecting it completely, preventing them from the sacred sanctuary, Makkah and then chasing

people out is worse than that. This type of social division and dissention is worse than killing itself.

In other words, that there are times that the actual engaging in martial conflict is better than allowing certain situations to emerge. That is why when Allah says in the Quran “you will have see churches, temples, synagogues and mosques wherein Allah’s name is recited often destroyed” because of predations of aggressive and velacose people fighting each other so Allah says “if Allah had not used one group of people to stop another group of people” and in another verse it says “there would be nothing but corruption on the earth”. This is an admittance or rather a teaching in the Quran that the root of human nature is aggressive. The founding fathers when they were arguing whether you had a confederation, this was the first big debate when they were ratifying the articles of federation. Hamilton wrote a piece saying “we did not want confederation because if you have a group of confederate states, each one of them an individual state, you are setting yourselves up for war and that is why he said there should be a centralised government and this is what monarchy means “ one source of authority”. It is what it means in Greek. War occurs when people do not accept the same sources of authority. This is at the root of war and that is why the idea of international law is only valid in an international community that accepts the laws. If you have vogue states that do not accept the law, now part of the trickery of modern state theory is that the international community itself, they are vogue states. This is part of the problem. So far instance the real calamity right now, people do not know this, it is not on Palestine, it is in Chechnya. Right now they are just massacring Chechniyans, it is not in the newspapers. Why? Because the Russians struck a deal with the Americans, war on terrorism. We will let you do whatever you want to the Chechniyans. Go wipe them out, that is what is happening. David Elliot now in Newsweek at the end of the article “pity about Chechnya”. That is how he ends his article, the whole article is just about real poitics that this is the nature of the world we are living in. All that moral background is lip service for the masses. So what happens in a world where you have people that all they have in their mind is their interests. They do not have higher concepts in mind because at the root of higher concepts is the idea of accountability. To whom are you accountable to? If you are not accountable to your citizens are no longer willing to challenge the rights and wrongs of the state. You have people in this country 200 years ago, if you look at the reasons that they rebelled against King George are nowhere near as significance as the type of oppression that exists in most parts of the world today. Things were not that bad in the US when the British were running, that is why a lot of Americans did not want to fight the British. They did not have a problem, they were doing fine.

Chapter 4

So if you look at the Muslim world now the fact that there are not mass revolutions and revolts is a testimony to the incredible patience on behalf of the Muslims. I mean I really believe that. It is a testimony to the fact that because they believe in God, because they believe in a sense that they know in essence that this about their own states not their governmental states but their spiritual states. In other words the conditions that we find ourselves in a society are reflections of the overall health of that society which at root is a spiritual health. A society is either well spiritually or sick spiritually and unfortunately the vast majority of people are very sick so this idea of jihad it is a noble concept. It is the idea of fighting for what is right, it is as simple as that and people have a right to do that. They have a right to defend their homes, to defend their religion, to defend their lands against the predations of aggressors. The Quran says “always be in preparation”. Why? Because the best way of maintaining peace is to always be prepared for war and that is unfortunately a truth of the world that we are living in until human beings can sit down and have a civil discourse and work out their problems like human beings. As long as you have people out there that are living to get and take what they want by hook or by crook by force and by power then you need to have people prepared to stand up against that.

Pacifism, the pacifist at the end of the day is somebody that becomes landless and a victim and that is why Aboriginal people traditionally the reasons they survived is that they lived in places that nobody wanted. Now they want the forest of Brazil. Look at all those Aboriginal people that just get wiped out because they want their wood but traditionally nobody bothered them because nobody wanted to go and live in the jungles of Brazil. Nobody wanted to live in the outback of Australia. The Aborigines were fine, they did not have any problem. The same with the native Americans in this country when they wanted to graze their cattle they needed to wipe out the buffalo and that is what happens to Aboriginal people. That is why Islam is just telling people to be prepared to defend themselves because that is the nature of the world you are living in, so the idea of submitting to Allah. That is why Muslims long before Brodieus or any of these European developments of internalised law which are now seen really as platitudes. I mean I am talking of the level of people that are running the worlds. I mean I read their stuff, read foreign affairs, read what they say. This is not conspiracy. This is just what they talk about. They are very open about it. Moral high ground is for the masses. The reality of it is real politics, business as usual.

Now unfortunately in the modern Muslim world and are signs of the end of time and I will say about jihad if you look at the rules of engagement, who determines the rules of engagement?

Islamic rules of engagement in the Mukhtasir of Sidi Khalil, it is prohibited to use poisoned arrows which is basically biological warfare. I mean Muslims developed rules of engagement. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “do not poison the wells of your enemies” This is biological warfare or chemical warfare basically. “Do not use fire in fighting your enemy because only Allah punishes with fire”. Nuclear holocaust. We use incendiary bombs all the time in this country. We use incendiary bombs. People are incinerated literally and you can see in Nagasaki, Hiroshima, they have footage at the shadows of people, just a shadow , people just blasted, annihilated. A hundred thousand civilians. They were civilians. They were only 10,000 Japanese soldiers in both of these cities and they knew that. That was actually taught to them by the British. Mad bomber Browning or something. British war theorist who thought that the best way to subdue a people into submission was to attack their civilian population. William Tomoska-Sherman, the march to the ocean I mean this is civil war theory. The confederates did not have this concept. They were deeply troubled by this idea of making civilians suffer but the idea of Sherman was that war is hell and there is no nice way to wage war. The best way to end it is to make the civilians suffer until the infrastructure breaks down because no state can support an army if the civilians are not behind it. That was the idea. This is why Dresden and the bombing of the German civilians is the same thing. These things are prohibited in Islam. That is when you look at the rules of engagement in Islam, Muslims should not be ashamed of them because we should be proud of, that these were given to us 1400 years ago, not killing women and children, it is a mutawatir hadith. It is absolutely prohibited in jihad to kill women and children, certainly not raping or pillaging. The idea of war booty which is permissible in Islam. Allah says “Anfal are Allah and His Messengers” you cannot take them.

One of the worse crimes in Islam and one of the greatest wrong actions is predated during war, to actually take property from people. No, the imam has to collect the property and then it is distributed. There are rules of engagement to make people civil in their behaviour. Abu Bakr when he sent his troops out said “do not poison wells, do not cut fruit trees, do not kill old people, do not kill women and children”. He would actually walk about and remind them of these principles and these were completely alien to the jahili Arabs. These were deeply revolutionary ideas. Jihad is grossly misunderstood, it is an unfortunately reality. I just want to finish this section in saying one thing. Last century, almost 200 million people were killed in war. 200 million people, the majority of whom were civilians. Unprecedented by far more than all of the human wars prior to that in one century because of modern technology. Now those people were not killed in the name of religion. They were killed in the name of communism, socialism, facism, democracy, whatever. Everything but religion. So this idea that religion causes wars is simply not true. Humans cause war, it is as simple as that. Humans are belligerent and Aristophiles the Greek playwright indicated that is really the men who are belligerent and the

only war is going to stop this is if women go on strike and stop producing sons for these old men to send out to die.

There is a beautiful scene in a film that was done, I think it was 1929 or 1930 "All Quiet on the Western Front" it is an-anti war film that was prohibited. They did not allow it be shown in this country. There is a scene where these German soldiers are all sitting around. It is World War One. One of them says "how did the war start?". The other German says "Well France offended Germany". He said "what does that mean? I am German, they didn't offend me". He says "no no no, the country offended our country". He said "well how did they do that?". He said "Well I don't know". This is the point, like who starts war? Who starts them? The majority of wars that are started are total acts of insanity. Really stupid, they really are. That is why you look at the during the 23 years of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) of the major wars that were the cause of the those deaths. You compare that to 1900 people on both sides killed during the lifetime of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). All they were doing were defending their homelands. These were individuals who knew who was aggressing them. It was not some state that was aggressing another state, it was human beings treating other human beings wrongly and they knew exactly who they were. They could actually point them, they could name them. Nobody knows who is starting what, nobody even knows the names of these people. A lot of it is just missile contracts and armaments. That us why Eisenhower after serving the military industrial complex when he left the White House in 1960, his farewell address, he warned Americans of this very dangerous collaboration which was new to this country that was of the military industrial complex. Once you get the military in industry in this collaborative relationship, the industry produces the arms, the military uses the arms. You are setting yourselves up for a very dangerous situation. You just wonder about who is reaping all the benefits of all this killing that is going on. Who supplied all the weapons? Every time I see pictures of Palestinians or Jews I see weapons manufactured in Britain or America, in Afghanistan. Where are all these weapons coming from? They are all Klashnikovs, M16, stronger missiles, Afghans did not make any of them. Who gave them all to them to do all that stuff? I mean that is the real question and the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "the one that sells weapons during strife, during times of discord is damned to hell". That is why in the Maliki madhab it is not even a valid contract. You cannot sell a weapon when there is civil discourse. I don't think anybody in this day, nobody has any moral authority to talk about the belligerence of Islam, that is my personal belief. They used to call the cold war the taunt status. The idea was we had enough weapons to blow them up. They had enough weapons to blow us up. They called itMAD. That was the acronym in the Pentagon. Mutually Assured Destruction. Let's make sure if they push the buttons that we push the button before their rockets get here. So all of them get wiped out, again just real stupidity here. The biological weapons technically, I mean these things are supposed to be banned right? The problem is there is no vigilance in terms

of the citizenry because the citizenry they are interested in what is on television or watching the latest ball game or what the batting average of so and so is. That is the reality so you get what you deserve but I am inclined towards those hadith of if it gets like that then just.... the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said towards the end of time there will be so much destruction it would be best to be like the two sons of Adam who just said "if you are going to raise your hand to kill me I am not raising my hand to kill you. I fear Allah the Lord of the Worlds". If killing is pointless, indiscriminate, there is nothing in that can be justified. It just becomes indiscriminate killing. You cannot justify that and so morally there is no justification. You cannot philosophically justify that kind of warfare. You cannot indiscriminately kill people. It is as simple as that. Only combatants in a just war are legitimate targets, that is it.

The next section he goes is the shariah which is the sacred law and I want to say about that when people think about the shariah you have to be careful because there is no concept whatsoever in Islam of a theocracy. This is one of the modern myths that have been perpetrated by modernist types of Muslims. The idea that Islam is a theocracy. If you look up theocracy in the dictionary it says "the rule of God or those who stand in the place of God". Isn't it interesting that the word for Abu Bakr when he was called the Khalifah, he was called Khalifah ta Rasulullah. He was not called Khalifatullah. He was called the Khalifah of the Messenger of God not of God because the only one that can truly rule with God's judgment is the Prophet of God. No one else. If Prophets are not walking the earth then nobody has that authority to say that this is the rule of God. It is as simple as that. What the Muslim shariah is in essence, understanding any circumstance you find yourself in. Each circumstance will have a ruling. One of the five rulings:

1. An obligation or a requirement which is wajib, you have to do it, paying charity
2. Something which is recommended highly encouraged to do. Zakat is wajib, sadaqah is mandoub. If someone is in need even though you have paid your 2.5% of zakat, if you see somebody in need, it is encouraged, you do not have to do it. It is highly encouraged to do it.
3. The permissible which is the majority of things in this world are simply permissible.
4. Mubah. Nobody can tell you have to do it, nobody can tell you, you cannot do it. It is just a permitted act. The majority of acts in this world are permitted. Then you have disliked actions like talking too much without benefit is disliked. To talk as in just chew the fat or something like that in this culture that type of talk is permissible unless it becomes excessive because there are things that are prohibited to say. You cannot backbite against people.

5. Prohibited: the things that are prohibited in this world are very few. If you take Imam Malik's position all that is prohibited "what is prohibited is from eating is carrion (dead flesh), blood, pig, meat and anything that is sacrificed for other than God". That is it and even that if he is forced to do it not out of transgression then there is no sin in that you can even eat pig if you have to eat pig if you are starving. So those are the only things that are prohibited. That intoxicants are prohibited, that is it "Do not go near fornication" it is a foul thing and has a bad end effect on society". One you allow fornication, just look at the end results, venereal diseases, illegitimate children, breakdown of family. That is all the Quran says, it is a bad road to take. Do not go down that road. Do not slander people. Do not steal. Pretty basic things that is what is prohibited. If you want to understand the essence of shariah is that it is a logical set of understandings that enables you to live your life without harming yourself or others, that is the essence of shariah. I will give you the essence as the usoolis understand it. There are five things or six, some break the dignity into lineage, honour and name.

Every single ruling in the shariah in the sacred law of Islam is designed to preserve one of these five things:

1. Religion because that is why you were created to worship God so preservation of religion and the beauty of Islam even though it is the preservation of Islam it also demands that Muslims preserve the right for other people to worship in their land. That is why the Hanafi and Maliki fiqh have even supported the Hindus, Buddhists and every religion to worship as they see their God or whatever they worship. Therefore commanding us to pray is to preserve religion. Commanding us to fast to preserve our religion. All these things hajj to preserve the religion.
2. Protection of life: That is why the prohibition of killing to preserve life. So all the laws that related to transactions and treating people correctly in things have to do with the preservation of life and property. You can create wars and things like that if you treat people wrongly. You can end up fighting and things like that. "Do not kill a soul that Allah has made sacred", "whoever kills a soul without just do or as a result of brigands or highway robbers and things like that in the earth (people that sow corruption on the earth) it is as if he has killed all humanity" so the soul is sacred, every human soul whether they are Jew, Christian, Buddhist, Hindi whatever. The soul is sacred and you have no right to take the soul without permission so those laws that related in shariah to preservation of life.

3. Preservation of property, of intellect. The prohibition of intoxicants is to preserve the intellect. That is why they are prohibited because the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “intoxicants are the roots that the matrix of so many foul things” and he said “that a man will become so drunk and end up sleeping with his child or his relative or kill somebody and not even know it”. Manslaughter, 50,000 people die every year in US because of drink drivers and people intoxicated. Most of the deaths on the road in accidents in America are related to drugs and alcohol. The prohibition of drugs and alcohol, people said we tried that in this country. We tried the temperance movement. The truth is that Muslims because they believe in it that it is from God, I mean if you think it is not God that has told you not to drink but it is just the government “well why should I do that if it is just the government, it is an absolute arbitrary law” whereas if you really believe it is from God for your protection and preservation then that is a different matter. That is why the Muslims generally have lived in societies, if you go to Mauritania, it is almost impossible to find drug taking and alcohol people, because people believe in that. They do not drink for that reason. I became Muslim when I was 18 and before that I had not touched anything. Before that I was just like teenagers in this country exposed to those things. You give it up for the sake of God. So I lived my entire adult life without every touching any intoxicant. I have not missed it, I am glad that I did not, I am glad I was protected from all that sorrow and suffering and things related to that. Then also the preservation of property. Prohibition of gambling, prohibition of usury, Prohibition of stealing, of theft, of embezzlement all these types of things to preserve property.

4. Preservation of lineage. Prohibits fornication to preserve lineage and also honour, dignity. That is why it is prohibited to slander and backbite, to speak ill of people because they have their name, their name is sacred and also you honour people’s names by not speaking ill of them. Unless you have a just reason to do that like in a court of law where you have to testify against somebody and then that rule is set aside for the greater good so there is a situational type of ethics here. There are things that override other things. That is why it is permitted to kill somebody who has taken life.

So that is the shariah. Shariah is a logical set of principles and precepts. There are a few things that the Quran has legislated clearly. One of them is inheritance and the reason for that is because one of the things that breaks families apart is the distribution of wealth after death of a wealthy relative so what shariah does it apportions that. Now out of nine categories, six of them are women. The things about Islam is that women did not inherit even in 19th century Britain. Women did not inherit wealth. In Switzerland in the 1920’s I think women could not even vote. Women in Switzerland could not vote until 1980 or something and that is considered one of the most progressive European countries but their idea was the family, one vote one house type thing. Then if you look at the differences, the idea of women getting half of men, that is not

always the case. There are cases where women get more than men in the division. With a daughter and a son, the son gets twice as much. Now the reason in shariah and it is never in the history of Islam, Ibn Qayyim al Jawziyyah in the 8th century, they interpreted this idea that men are better than women or they get twice as much because they are twice as good, never, it was always understood that the responsibilities of wealth that men have that women do not have. That was understood to be the rationale. That men have to take care of women, maintain them, it is an obligation, therefore their money is obligatory whereas women's money is discretionary. Whatever she earns, whatever she inherits, it is hers. She does not have to support anybody or give it to anybody as long as she pays zakat. That is why the Muslim world was full of very wealthy women over history. Many of them were great supporters of Islam as well as building mosques, hospitals, universities.

The Quran and Sunnah and the historical embodiments talks about the madhabs and I want to go over that very quickly. The basic four Sunni madhabs came out of a recognition that there are many ways to interpret a verse for instance the Quran says about divorce that you should wait, the word it uses is "quru" and qur in Arabic means it is from the opposite words. It means the time in which a woman is menstruating but it also means the time she is free from menstruating. There was no clarification from the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) about which one it was and so it became an ijthadi issue. Some of the scholars said it means the time between periods. Other said it means the time of the period. The reason that we believe that God left it like that is that it forces people to think that part of the reason that the Quran was revealed was to force people to use their intellect "We sent down this Quran in order to force you to think". That is one of the meanings of that verse, in order for you to use your intellect. Ijtihad means it comes from jihad to exert one's utmost intellectual endeavour, to understand the intentions behind a verse of hadith. That is what ijthad is. For that reason there are multiple interpretations and therefore the shariah is open to interpretation as long as it is not crazy or something that is off the wall. Generally there are many different opinions. Abu Hanuifah for instance believes that Muslim and non Muslims are equated in murder so if a Muslim kills a non Muslim the the Muslim dies. Imam Malik did not. He said that they had to pay the blood money. That is a difference of opinion. You get those types of differences of opinion in the shariah and those are all open to discussion and debate.

I think a very interesting section here which is jurisprudence and politics. One of the things that modern Muslims have really come to believe is Islam is a political philosophy which is very interesting because that at its essence is the claim of Zionism. Zionism turned Judaism into a political philosophy. One of the signs of the end of time is that the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa

sallam) said that “you will follow Bani Israil”, you will become like Bani Israil and just as Bani Israil wanted a Zionist state there are now modern Muslims that want this thing called an Islamic state. An Islamic state is the idea that you can force people to be good Muslims which is a completely insane idea. It has never existed and it will never exist. If you think religion can be legislated by a government you are completely deluded. It is a delusional state and I have no other word for it and Allah says in the Quran “do you think that you can force people to be believers?”. Do you think that you can force people to believe? It does not work. Islam is an internal mechanism. The best thing a government can do is to provide as close as possible a court system that is not open to bribery. Even the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “out of three judges, 2 go to hell” which is bad odds. That is why traditionally Muslim scholars never wanted to be judges and that is why all four of the imams were completely apolitical. They were not involved in politics. The only political stand that Ahmad bin Hanbal took was actually not a political stand. It was related to aqeedah because he declared openly that the Quran was uncreated because the mutazalite had convinced the ruling party that the Quran was created. It was a stupid period, people did stupid things. Abu Hanifah refused to enter into politics and was imprisoned for it. Imam Malik, if you read the entire mu'aduna does not have one political statement. He was once accused of sympathizing with Muhammad Nafz Zakia who was on the family for the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) that led a rebellion in the Hijaz. He did not have political positions. All he was doing was teaching shariah. If you want to learn and apply it, murhaban, if you do not then good luck in the akhirah. That is the way that religion has to be. It has to be free of politics. Once the scholar becomes engaged in the political process he is corrupted by it because that is the nature of the world. It is a corrupting element and you do not want religion to be tainted by the temporal. You always want religion to have that atemporal quality to it. That is why Islam did not create a priesthood or ecclesiastical society. The idea is that every believer should try and be as close to God as he or she can. So you do not want a group of priests dictating for you. Anybody can become a scholar. There is no ordainment. Scholars if they are really routed and trained can have differences of opinion. There is no official church theory. The Pope says “no you all have to agree with me”, no the ulema differ one of them says this and another says that and people are deemed intelligent enough with common sense to be able to discern right and wrong in a healthy society.

This modern concept is really unfortunate. It has just had a really bad effect on the Muslims because what happens is that if these guys get into power they will be just as bad as the previous governments if not worse. They will create the same intelligence mechanisms and they will do the torture, the same thing. If you do not think that this country has it, we have it. It just does not happen in the same way. The school of the Americas they trained people to do torture and do all that stuff but they do it in South America, they do it in the Middle East that is why some of the Qaida guys, they want to interrogate them in other countries. So they can put the electrodes on

and do all that stuff and feel good about it because it did not happen inside the United States. Fuqahah can become like lawyers everywhere, jurists know how to manipulate the law for their own ends and there has always been jurists who would sell their skills to the powers that be. Every king has had an official mullah or two who was willing to issue whatever Islamic edicts that were necessary for the government to function in the way the king desired. So it still goes on.

That is why Muslims always saw that scholars that were aligned with government rulers or leaders that were in their pay and things like that to visit them, to speak the truth that is encouraged. An alim should go and if he is able to tell the truth to an oppressor or a ruler. Most rulers are oppressors in one way or another, that is encouraged but to become a court mullah, the real scholars fled from that like they would flee from a lion because they knew what it meant and then in our view of things politics was never a very important issue for the vast majority of Muslims throughout history like most people. Many Muslim thinkers were intensely interested in establishing social harmony and equilibrium on the basis of shariah but they did not see this as something that should or could be instituted from above and that is the truth. I mean you look at all these ulema and read their books, they never saw the idea that you could institute ethics and morality in a society. Ethics and morality comes from families, comes from how you were raised, how your parents taught you and whether you are going to live up to those morals that they gave you. In bad societies, parents do not have ethics and morals to transmit to their children. A lot of the world now it is just very little real ethical and moral behaviour because people are not raised with those ideals anymore. They see their parents cheating and doing all those things and that is what they end up doing. So it is as simple as that.

Questions

It is mentioned that the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) considered suicide.....

That was wrong. Those narrations have never been considered sound by scholars. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) would never have contemplated suicide but he was troubled by that.

As we as American taxpayers accountable for our states decision to sell weapons?

There is some accountability if you are paying taxes. There is some accountability. Theroux went to jail because he would not pay taxes. Read "Civil Disobedience", when I was growing up they taught that in high school. I am not sure if they still teach it anymore probably not pay taxes because he thought the government was supporting slavery. He thought that was wrong. When his friend Emerson went to get him out he looked up and said "Henry what are you doing in there?". He looked at Ralph and said "what are you doing out there?". He said "in an unjust society the only place for a just man is in jail".

The global war picture, is it a war of religion?

I think it is a very strange thing but I think right now what it seems to me that is going on is there is a lot of money to be made now in war. The one great detriment historically for war was commerce which is why Muslims are always commercial states and Muslims actually preferred peace to war because they liked to do business, they liked to trade with people and when you have a society whose number one industry is war, you have a problem and Israel is the biggest arms producer outside of America and France. It is just massive arms production. I do like fairness, you know the Arabs have been saying for years they are going to chase every Jew into the ocean and Europeans were stuck in the middle of the Middle East by Europeans. It was a crazy idea and the most foolish thing that the Arabs did was they got rid of all their Jews. The Moroccan Jews never wanted to go to Israel. They did not want to migrate, they have been in those countries for centuries. The Persian Jews loved Persia and I have met Persian Jews that told me about growing up in Persia and what an incredible country it was. Iraqi Jews loved Iraq. That is the truth and you can still find the stories of this. The Muslims have never had a problem with Jews. Hamza Abu Bakr who was imam of the mosque in Paris. The imam in Paris hid Jews. You will not see this in Schindler's list. The imam in Paris hid Jews in the basement of the mosque in Paris from the Nazis. 200 of them and fed them. The Jews of Morocco because King Muhammad the fifth would not deport the Jews to the Germans and they were protected. The Moroccan Jews loved the king. Moroccan Jews go from Israel to Morocco to take bayah with the king whenever a king died in Morocco. So the Jews have never had a problem with the Muslims. There are rare exception where Muslims did stupid things like the Fatimid, the insane ruler, killed Jews and killed Christians but he was insane literally stark raving mad. It was an unfortunate period but no one has ever justified it. The Muslims have never had any problems, they have never killed Jews, they have never gone and massacred them, they have never had that problem.

Unfortunately the Jews were treated like dirt for centuries in Europe, they were spat on, humiliated, they were shamed, they used to force them to run naked through the streets as a kind of joke. Their children would throw rocks on them and spit on them. Read the “History of Jews in Europe”. It is horrific. Muslims did not treat them like dirt. In fact Jews ended up reaching some of the highest levels of social status in the Muslim countries. Some of the greatest philosophers, Andalusia produced the greatest Jewish philosophers in history. Gabara, Musha bin Maymuna, Nichimites, these are some of the greatest scholars and they came out of Islamic Spain. They wrote in Arabic and their teachers were Arabs. It is just crazy, everything is going insane and people are going crazy and it has happened before. This is not the first time. Read history, humans are just very unfortunately unbalanced and it is going crazy right now and things come around. We just have to ride it out. We might survive it, we might not. This is what humans do, just ride out this stuff but there is a lot of imbalance on this planet. People are very out of balance. They are walking around in states of total imbalance. What we are doing, how we are treating each other. Just the trees, I think of the trees. 300,000 fruit trees have been uprooted in Palestine. What is their crime? What did they do? 300,000 fruit trees, what did they do? Then you wonder why that hadith says “there is a Jew behind me, come kill him” in Sahih al Bukhari. I mean what would I say if I was a tree about ready to be pulled up and I could talk “Get rid of this character, you know get rid of him, why is he doing this to me, what did I do,?”. You don’t think trees have a right to be here? Trees worship God. Trees do not have any legal rights, they have rights. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) never harmed a tree. Aligning yourself with heaven is what Islam is about you know, get back in order, get back into harmony. That is why we are supposed to pray with the sun, get up with the sun, go to bed with the sun, be in order. My advice to myself and all of you is just to find some order in your lives. Go walk, it is incredible, what an incredible world, just look at it, just awesome. What a glorious day, perfection, it is everywhere, excepting this one odd figure of the human. He is the only thing mucking it all up. It is all perfect. Frogs are having 5 legs now, did you read that? They are all getting mutated. What did they do? What did the frogs do? It just wants to worship God, that is all they want to do. They just want to worship God and now they are mutating because of all these chemicals and all this horrific stuff people are doing and the human guinea pigs. It is just madness. So anyway I’ll stop my rant. What do we do? Ride it out. The moment you check out of this hotel, I guarantee there is no looking back. Dunya is not something to write home about.

One thing that I wanted to say about jihad that I did not mention in the session was that and this leads into the madhabs. There is a difference of opinion about the reason for jihad. Out of the four Sunni imams and they are Abu Hanifah, Imam Malik, Imam Shafi and Imam Ahmad and before I go into explaining that I’ll just.....and that is the section here. When the initial Islamic event occurs which begins in 610 with the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) the beginning of the revelation and ends in approximately 632 in which the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam)

passes. During this time the Quran was being revealed and initially the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) prohibited them from writing down his words because he did not want the Quran to be mixed with the hadith. Just to explain the difference for the people who do not know. The Quran is Muslims believe that this is directly from God to the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) through Jibril. There is no other means of transmission. The Quran came, everything that the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) uttered that as from the Quran according to the Muslims came through Gabriel.

There is a second source of revelation which is called hadith and hadith is anything that the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said or was said of him or was done in his presence or said in his presence and he agreed with it. Then some add to that a fourth category which is descriptions of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). So generally that is what hadith is, obviously the strongest one would be the one he himself said.

Now the Quran is over 6000 verses and it comes in 114 chapters or surah which means enclosure. It is made of ayah which are roughly translated as verses and of over 6000 verses of the Quran there are approximately 500 that directly related to legislative matters. The vast majority of the Quran does not relate to legislation. It actually relates to what we understand about God and then the historical process, history, its purpose, what human beings are here for, a lot of it is calling human beings to reflect on the creation, some of it tells us of the stories of those who went before us, this conflict between the prophetic tradition and the pharonic tradition. The Quran in a sense sets up a dialect in the world between a pharonic impulse to control and a prophetic impulse or prophetic truth to liberate people from control models and to enter into a type of submission in which they are no longer subjugated to these control models that tyrannise them and keep them basically trapped in delusional ways of viewing the world and what the world is here for. So the pharaoh, his symbol is the pyramid. It is a very interesting symbol because the pyramid is moving to a human apex which is the Pharaoh and his inner circle and the rest of that society is supporting that structure. So human beings are really seen as servants of those in power or those in charge and those in charge then have magicians.

They have four components that the pharonic model has. Firoun which is the political component, Haman which is the economic component, it is the economic power base. Then there is the military component which empowers both the political and the economic to do what they want. Allah says that all of them are wrongdoers. So being a soldier for this system is also participating for the crime of the system. There is a fourth component and these are the

magicians. These are the ones that keep people in awe, that bewitch people, that put veils over them to make them think something is real when it is not real so that is the Pharonic system. Those are the fourth components of the pharonic system that are mentioned in the Quran.

One of the things about the pharaoh is that he is very sensitive, he sends spies out so he uses a spy network. He wants to know everything that is happening in society. He is very forceful because what he is afraid of, what Allah says in the Quran “Allah is going to show Firoun his economic power, his military power, the very thing that he was fearing” so Pharaoh focuses the Prophetic element in the society because a Prophetic element is exposing the lie of the pharonic culture and so the Pharonic culture has a deep seated fear of the element because it is an element that is telling people you were not created to create pyramids, you were not created to serve pharaoh, you were not created just to make money, you were not created to exploit, you were created to worship Allah.

Now the Pharonic model uses manipulation of nature and that is why when they threw down their sticks they looked like snakes whereas with the Prophetic model, it is truth. It is not illusion. When it shows its hand, it gobbles up the falsehood. That is why they do not like the two to be together. They like to make sure that element is not allowed any type of mass audience because if it is it becomes very dangerous so that is one of the most important elements in the Quran is this model and that is why the Pharaoh and Musa is the most important story in the Quran, it is repeated more than any other story. Each time it comes in the Quran it has nuances because ultimately that is the human conflict. It is between a control model which is about getting the creature to submit to higher creatures and the Islamic model is that you do not submit to creatures, you submit to the Creator. So these are in opposition. So that is one element of the Quran.

There are many different aspects of the Quran but the legislative aspect is really, it is not the major portion of the Quran. From the hadith now which are the sayings of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam), one of the really interesting things for me as somebody that learned Arabic and can read both the Quran and the hadith is that they are completely different.

Anybody who is well trained in Arabic will immediately recognise the Quran even if he does not memorise the Quran because it has a unique quality to it that is different from other Arabic speech even great poets, great orators when you read their speeches you know it is not the Quran

even if you do not memorise the Quran, the Quran has a mysterious component. It is very different to other speech and that is what the Quran says “it is not like other speech”. The Quranic challenge is to imitate the Quran and in 1400 years nobody has ever done it and there have been people who have attempted it. There is no doubt, there were attempts. Now what happens with language is because language is such a strange phenomena in the world for instance if I say “John came yesterday”. If you read that would not see intonation. I could say “John came yesterday”

Chapter 5

The corpus of hadith is not the proof for everything in Islam and that gives you the next category of proof which is called qiyas, analogical reasoning. A large portion of shariah and a lot of Muslims do not know this, a large portion of shariah or sacred law is actually not directly from Quran or hadith. It actually comes out of human understanding. Now who do we trust? We trust people that first of all the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said that the best generation are my generation in the understanding of Islam and behaviour according to it. Then the next generation and the next generation. That third generation ends with these groups of imams. They are the last group. So they are called the people who wrote everything down. The people before them were people who heard it from the sahaba and the sahaba were people who lived it. So each generation is less adherent to the tradition then the one who preceded it. That is why the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “no time will come except the time that follows it is worse that it until you meet your Lord”. What that means is that each generation, they are less understanding, less practising and less aware of God. The ulema say that in each generation there is always exceptions so you will have somebody in a generation that might actually be better than some of the scholars that preceded him, more knowledgeable, things like that but they will still not be from a generation. The best generation were the first three, that does not negate the possibility of individuals coming later that are great like the people who went before but as large numbers of people, that disappears and it increasingly does so until the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “till people will have sex in open public places and the best people in those days will say “would you go do that somewhere else?”. There is a hadith that says that. So things get morally worse and all of these things.

The madhab is when you have a hadith that is open to several interpretations and most words by their nature can have more than one interpretation. If the imams differed on it then because they have reached a level which is called ijthihad mutlkaq where you reach a level of absolute ability to

determine or derive legal rulings. That does not mean that you cannot be wrong but it means you are so knowledgeable that you have the authority to be wrong. Somebody who is a fool, even if he is right, he is wrong whereas somebody who is very brilliant and very humble and capable of his limitations which these men were then even when he is wrong, he is still right because he is basing it on deep deliberation. He is basing it on thought, he is not basing it on thoughts, opinions or foolishness, no his judgment has arrived out of serious effort. It is a very different when you meet somebody who holds an opinion because he read it in Newsweek or someone who holds an opinion because he has thoroughly examined the issue, he has weight and authority. If somebody just reads the headlines and then he is just going to spout his opinion then he is a fool and it is a fool that takes his opinion seriously. I mean that is the reality of it. That is when the Quran says “are they the same those who know and those who do not know?”. They are not the same even when they are wrong, they are not the same. Somebody who is wrong, who is speaking out of knowledge is not the same as someone who is right and speaking out of ignorance. You are still safer with the one who is wrong with deep knowledge and understanding. The thing about these people is that they will never be way off because they know the principles.

One of the things that the ancients, particularly the Greeks, they had this understanding that if you understood the universals, the particulars would take care of themselves. One of the things about modern men and women is that they are obsessed with particulars and they know nothing of universals and so when you know the general principle you are not going to make big mistakes in the particulars. You just will not make big mistakes. If you know it is a general rule “there is no harming and there is no reciprocation of harm”. That is a principle of Islam. If you know that principle that is going to save you from a lot of problems. If you know the principle “that matters are based on intentions behind them”. That is going to affect how you view people’s actions. If you understand the principle “duress necessitates facilitation or ease”. That when people are under stressful conditions you need to help them by making things easier in order to remove that stress because people in stressful situations will begin to break down mentally so that is why rulings will change in times of great difficulty. So a scholar who knows that like Shaykh Abdullah bin Bayyah he has opinions what other scholars they do not see it because he knows the universal so when he moves into particulars he knows how to work with them in a different way whereas there are people who lean the particulars of shariah, they memorise all the rules for a do b, for c do d and when they see c then that is what you do. Well is that always in every situation? So there is a very big difference between people who have this and this is what these imams are famous for. There were famous for this vast understanding of this philosophy behind the shariah is for human benefit and therefore if they found things that were harmful to people even though the law said do it they would change the law and that is

hard for a lot of Muslims to understand because they have lost their flexibility. Intolerance generally comes from ignorance. That is a root of intolerance.

You want to remove intolerance first you have to remove ignorance. So the madhab are based on those differences of understanding. So what I want to say about the jihad. There is a difference about what is the reason for jihad. Out of the four imams: Imam Malik, Abu Hanifah, Imam Ahmad believed that the reason that fighting was legislated was to remove aggression or belligerence. Imam Shafi said no it was to remove kufr, it was to get rid of kufr. Now that is a big difference in understanding. Generally in the history of Islam the ruling governments favoured the Hanafi and Maliki madhab which created an incredible tolerance for other peoples, non Muslims. But even with the Shafi when they had authority they basically applied the principle of the other imam. So even though that is the principle of Imam Shafi it was not the practice of the scholars of this madhab.

As we move into Islam and iman. What is the difference between Islam and iman? Islam in the Arabic language comes from the root word “salimah” and salimah means to be whole. It is the same root of the Jewish Hebrew word they get Shalom from shaloma, The idea that salaam is wholeness, when we speak of God as as-Salaam, that is a name of God, what it means is that God has no parts. Now when you have wholeness you have peace. War comes about when you have divisiveness. Do you see how the understanding of peace comes out of this understanding of wholeness?. If people are whole, if there is an integrity in a people then you will not have wars. But when a people become divisive, you get belligerence. In Islam generally when they ruled they believed that Jews and Christians and other religions had a right to live and practice amongst them. They were certain conditions but they had that belief. It is in their religion whereas there are other religions that have ruled that did not believe that. They actually believed that they had no right at all so that creates a very different type of society. It creates a divisiveness that leads to a war. So the Muslims have always seen that.

If you look at the human body there are things on the body that do not serve a purpose for the body as a whole but they are part of the body. You can have scars on your body. They are part of the body, you do not dig further to get rid of the scar, you just leave it the way it is. There is still a wholeness even though it might not be something you necessarily like or want there but you tolerate it because it is part of the body.

So traditionally Muslims saw other religions not as co-religions but as co-human beings. They are human beings we would rather they be Muslim but they are part of the social body and so we should tolerate them. The Quran says that they can be part of families, they can be married into families, they should be treated with dignity but even with kindness and friendship and these things.

The difference between Islam and iman is the word salimah which means whole relates to the outward of Islam. When we say Islam what we mean is an outward practice. That is why a Muslim is anyone who basically says I am a Muslim. The way they say that is “la ilaha ilal Allah”. Anyone who says “there is no God but one God and Muhammad is His messenger” is considered a Muslim whether he practises or not. That is enough to come into Islam and then they are treated as a Muslim. They are buried as a Muslim as long as they never reject that.

According to Islamic teaching the more you practice with good intention the stronger the iman gets. So the iman is the inward component. It is not something you can see. Islam you can see basically. Iman is something only God can see. That is the secret of bani Adam. The unseen element of faith. That is why in the Quran when the Arabs say.... These desert Arabs came to the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and said “we believe”. Allah said “don’t say we believe but say we have submitted because iman has not yet come into your hearts”. So the Quran clearly distinguishes between Islam and iman. Now we can also see Islam as a greater rubric that includes iman and ihsan. So it is looked at as a specific but also looked at as an inclusive word.

He takes the mutazalite approach here a little bit. Generally the Sunni scholars believe that iman was merely tasdeeq which means to verify something in your heart, to believe it in your heart, that is all it was. Then there was a difference of opinion whether you actually had to say it with your tongue. Obviously if you were mute and could not speak it, you didn’t. But if you could they said it was an obligation and then action according to this.

This is a classic debate between the Protestants and Catholics, also, is it faith and deeds that one is saved or is it faith alone? Obviously the Protestant tradition says it is faith alone, deeds do not come into it. In a sense that is closer to the Islamic tradition in that particular aspect the Muslims believe that faith alone in God is enough although there is an idea that there might be some purification in the next world for those people so it is a very dangerous and precarious type condition to be in where you have faith in your heart but no deeds. Malik bin Dinar tells a story

that he saw a funeral and he decided to go help them bury this person. He helped put him down into the grave and it had a very powerful effect on him which it often does if you go to funerals. Muslim funerals are particularly powerful because the body is just in cloth. It is not in a coffin so you are putting the person right into the earth and throwing dirt on them.

So he went to his home and fell asleep and he had a dream that he was in the grave with the man. He saw the angel of mercy and the angel of punishment. They look at the man and one of them says, the one of punishment says “this man is mine”. He said “look at his eyes, they are filled with the prohibitions of Allah things that Allah prohibited. Look at his ears, they are filled with things he never should have listened to”. Look at that tongue, it is filled with a life spent in speaking ill of others, deception and lying. Then he said “look at that stomach, filled with haram, look at those genitals, going where they should not have gone”. Then the angel of mercy says “but look at his heart, it is filled with faith and he is mine”. That is at the essence of the idea of no matter what a person’s actions are, only God knows the heart and ultimately it is the heart by which people are judged. If we were judged by our actions we would all be like Hamlet says “if you give people what they deserve, who would escape a whipping?”. Don’t give them what they deserve, give them out of your magnanimity. That is what Allah shows people on yaum al qiyaamah because the hadith in which it says that Allah has 100 parts of mercy and one part He sent down to the earth and that part is the part that every mother that shows mercy to her child is from that part. Every foal that will not step on its mare from that part. Every good kind act in the world is from that part so all mercy in the earth comes from that one portion that Allah allowed to come down from the celestial sphere and then the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “and He has saved the other 99 for the day of judgment”.

So the idea of just being Muslim on the tongue is part of Islam. People as long as they say that, that is why the man simply recites shahada with two Muslim witnesses, like two people who marry, they use the example of a man who wants to marry a Muslim woman. This happens quite a bit. He just officially goes and does the shahada. Muslims are generally a little wary when they see that but they accept it nonetheless because that is what Islam tells them to do.

There is a man in our history known as Muhajir um Qays the man who emigrated for this woman who he said “I want to marry you” and she said “emigrate to Madinah with the Muslims and I will marry you”. So he did for her. He is called Muhajir um Quys. So even if someone does something outwardly and he has a different inward intention, we are commanded to judge by the outward.

Now about the location of faith in the heart. The Quran says that Allah knows what is in the breast and what is in the heart. Then the idea of actions according to Islam, actions confirm your faith, the action itself is what confirms the faith. That is why charity is called sadaqah which comes from the root word to be truthful because charity is a sign of truthfulness of your faith. When you are charitable, you are showing that your faith is true.

That is why when somebody sees someone do a lot of good actions, the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “if you see somebody who frequents the masjid a lot, testify to his faith” because those actions are indications of his faith. So an action is always an indication of somebody’s faith but not necessarily. There can be hypocrites, there can be people who can be ostentatious, all of these types of things.

He talks about kufr. We go into the idea of opposite of faith which is kufr. Now kufr is generally translated as infidelity or disbelief. If you look up the root word of kufr it comes from kaffarah which means to cover. In fact, cover might actually be a cognate. It means to cover over something. Kefir which is a yoghurt you do by covering over with a cloth. It is called kefir. The kafir is also a farmer in Arabic because he covers the seed with earth.

The Quran uses the word kafir to mean farmers. Someone once saw Imam Ali who was planting something and somebody asked him “how are you doing today?”. He said “I am a kafir” in other words “I am a farmer today”.

Now the idea is very interesting because at the root of this idea is that people know the truth but what they are doing is covering it over. The idea that God is so outwardly manifest that to reject God is to reject what is so blatantly apparently in the world. Only a kafir could do that, someone who is covering over. That is why the word literally can also mean in gratitude. Ingratitude is another meaning of kufr. Kufran means ingratitude. So a kafir is actually an ingrate. It is somebody who is not showing God gratitude by repaying the debt of consciousness and the debt is the deen. It is the deen that you owe to God.

He likes the word truth concealing for kufr. She says someone might object to the use of truth concealing by saying “I do not know these truths” nor do I accept that these are truths so how can I be a truth concealer”. Traditional Muslims would typically reply that such people have

simply not understood what the Quran is saying. In other words if they really understood it they would not reject it but it is because they do not understand it. If they would pay more attention to the message they would actually say, this is an interesting exercise to do with anything. Let me look at this unbiasedly. Let me look at this without judging it because if you ask most people about Islam they assume it is just wrong. They have not studied it “that religion, they are just this or that”. It is no basis or foundation for that remark. So if I am a Christian, I say no, Christianity is right. Why? Because my mother told me and my mother does not lie. Well that is the same thing that the Sri Lankan Buddhist mothers said that Buddha was the one he should call on and mother does not lie. The Muslim in Egypt, his mother said “O Allah send blessings upon the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and she does not lie”.

So who is right? Most people have inherited their beliefs. They have never thought about them, they have never examined them. That is why people or fanatics or extremists tend to be people whose belief is very shaky because they are actually so afraid if having a challenge that they are willing to kill anyone that challenges it which means they do not really have a challenge for their beliefs because someone who is deeply rooted in faith would never be afraid of sitting like Abu Hanifah who sat in huge auditoriums and debates with atheists because he was not afraid. He really believe that I can, my faith and my understanding of it can stand up against anything that falsehood has in its arsenal but if I don't have a strong faith, I am very afraid of the arsenal of disbelief that it might overwhelm me so that is the way that traditional Muslims would say that.

This is a more personal belief, not an Islamic belief. My personal belief that the variables involved in judging anyone are so overwhelming and it is so complicated that it is best not to judge people. Just leave it to God, because you have not walked in their shoes, you did not have their childhood, you do not know what was done to them. We do not know enough and this is why people their filters are often as a result of the families they had, the society they grew up in and delusional states are types of madness. Delusion is a sign and symptom of madness, to be in a deluded state, junoon.

So even with the outward we are commanded to judge certain things by the outward. We should always do that in this world. The best thing to do is to reserve judgment for the next world in those ultimate things because Allah says in many verses in the Quran “you will return to Him and He will explain to you all these things about you which were different”. He will tell you, He will inform you so people should have some patience. Things will be made clear and you do not know where people are in their evolution.

An example is Michael Wolf, Michael Wolf is a person who told me, he said the reason I am telling you because he said it on a television programme, he thought about becoming a Muslim for 20 years so was he a kafir for those 20 years? The thing is he ultimately became Muslim. So where does he lie on the spectrum? It is a fuzzy logic question. At which point do you go into kufr from iman and vice versa. It is a fuzzy logic there, because only a life in its totality can be judged, You cannot judge anyone at any specific point in their life because you do not know what the total life is. At the end of the day if he dies saying tawbah and Allah accepts that tawbah, he could be the worst human being that ever lived and that is success according to the Muslims. So you cannot judge people at any particular point in their lives. You have to have the whole life. Only God can do that. So do not judge people unless somebody stole, you have to deal with that problem, that is a problem and there is a judgment that goes with it. Even in that case you can forgive them. If I own a store and someone steals and I can say it is yours. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “have mercy on anyone in the earth, on those in the earth”. It doesn't just mean specific people. Have mercy or compassion with those on the earth and the One in the heavens will have compassion on you. This is what Thomas Jefferson said “when I looked at people I demanded divine justice. Then I started looking at myself and I began to beg for mercy”. That is a powerful statement.

You look outside and you want justice. You start looking inside and you want mercy. I will tell you another thing and people do not realise this, every fault that you see out there and this is from misbahaani every fault you see out there is a fault on you. It is a fault in you either manifest or like fire in flint. In other words had you lived that person's life you might be doing that exact thing that that person is doing.

So because you are human and humans are susceptible to all things human, anyone you see out there with a fault is a fault in you either manifest or hidden in you like fire in flint. In other words the right cause can start the spark and that is a way of looking at the world with compassion. You actually begin to look at human beings in a different light because you do not know what they have been through, you do not know the suffering they have had.

The three principles: this deals with tawheed because we are going into tawheed. The foundation of tawheed falls into three broad categories. The first is called the divinities, the second is called the things related to prophethood and the third eschatological matters. Those things that are related to eschatology or what comes after we die. So we have theology, then you have revelation and then you have eschatology. Those are the three branches of tawheed.

Now one of the things that is important here is God is the foundation the beginning of everything Islamic according to our belief. The angels are creatures nearest to God in cosmic hierarchy and they play a central role in God's interrelationship with human beings so they are intermediaries. The measuring out which is the qadr both its good and evil refers to how God interacts with creation. To each thing God measured out a certain limited amount of good and as the negative consequences of exactly the same act a certain amount of evil.

Everything is created in pairs because only Allah is without pair. This world is a mixture of good and evil, light and darkness. The whole world is shade, there is no pure light in the world. The only reason you can see right now is a mixture of light and the absence of light. If it was pure light you would be blind. If it was pure darkness you would be blind. So the whole world is a mixture of light and darkness. Now what Allah is telling is that He created this world to take you from darkneses into light so the process of being in the world is a process of moving through shades. It is a process of coming from darkness into the light but that is a process. He is taking you out of darkness so there are different degrees of darkneses to the one light which is the light of guidance. This is an evolution so human beings if they are on a spiritual are evolving, things are becoming clearer because more light is coming in. More light is being introduced into the darkness of the material world. So this is the penetration of the spiritual realm into the material realm. This is what revelation in essence is. It is the movement from the unseen into the seen from that pure light, it is light moving into the darkness of the material world. Because the material world in a sense not pure otherness but because it is other than God because it is corruptible because it has elements that are susceptible to corruption. The degree to which these elements exist in the world is the degree of darkneses in the world because it is other than God.

The elements in the world of light relate to the fact that the creation is an act of God. So tawheed, the first is the shahada. The first shahada expresses tawheed while the second speaks of prophecy. Now this I think is very important insight for all of us to understand here. If you look at the shahada la ilaha ilal Allah. Now the way that is said is significant. There are three letters here in the whole shahada that is all, there is just three letters. The alif, hamza, laam and ha which means ilah, God and this is the definition of ilah. Another thing about shahada is if you actually say it la ilaha ilal Allah. It is the same thing. It is just moving the tongue up and down. Now what that is is contraction and expansion. Contraction la, expansion la ilaha ilal Allah. Contraction, expansion. That is related to the two aspects of shahada which is negation and affirmation. You have negation which precedes affirmation. In other words you have to negate before you can affirm.

So when you say in Arabic, when you negate you say la. In Arabic when you affirm you say ajal. La is the negation, a is the affirmation. That is the Arabs say awai, awaillahi, that is how you affirm something. When you negate you say la. That is why the first thing a child learns in most cultures is negation, la because it hears it obviously “don’t do that”, no no. So it learns quick that it is a powerful thing. They realise it is powerful because negation is very powerful but more powerful than negation is affirmation.

Affirmation wipes out negation. So what happens is you begin by negating and you end up by affirming. You begin by saying la ilaha ilal Allah. That is the beginning of tawheed, negation la ilaha, there is no God. What does that mean? There is no God worthy of worship. In other words there is nothing worthy of worship. In reality, this is why the Arabs say “there is nothing worshipped in truth other than God”. That is what it means. There is nothing worshipped in truth other than God, that is what it means. There is nothing worshipped in truth other than God. That is why when you say la ilaha ilal Allah, you are saying there is no God in reality except the one true God. You are also saying that there is nothing that I should devote myself to except God. There is nothing I should be devoted to in truth except God. Not money, money is not God, fame is not God, fortune is not God, beauty is not God, material world is not God, nothing is worthy of worship except God. There is your affirmation except the true God, Allah. That is the essence of tawheed and then because that is not self evident in reality. You need to understand it through a medium because self evident truths are not truths that are simply obvious. They are truths that are simply not obvious on reflection and that is why, if you look at the declaration of independence, it says we hold the truths to be self evident that all men are created equal. That is not something that is obvious to everybody but if you begin to reflect upon it, it is a self evident truth. It does not need to be proved from outside of itself.

So what we mean by God’s existence is self evident, it does not mean necessarily everyone is going to get that, that there is only one God. In fact most cultures fall very quickly into polytheism because it is very easy to think there is more than one God and that is why the Brahmin actually believe that most people are too stupid to understand divine unity even though the highest varna or class in Hinduism believes in one God. They do not believe in idols but what they say is that the people in the lower class do not have the intellect to grasp this truth so we need to give them forms that they can hold onto. The same is true in other religions that there are icons and they need objects of worship because it is difficult to worship the abstract. Outside of the Muslims the Jews are unique because Christianity quickly moved into worshipping forms and icons became objects of worship. In Judaism, there is no form for God that is why the holiest of the holy was an empty room when the Roman Emperor, when they conquered Jerusalem.

They actually went into the holy of holies. He thought he was going to find all these idols but what he found was an empty room like the Kabah. It was like what do they worship? Well that is exactly it. It is not in this world. So that is difficult, abstractions for people are really difficult. That is why tawheed is a high thing. It is not a low thing even though it is very simple in the outward la ilaha ilal Allah even children do it. La ilaha ilal Allah is one of the first things that children can say. Lullaby comes from a Greek word lulin which means soothing. That is why lullabies have lalala in them. That is why la ilaha ilal Allah is very soothing.

Some psychiatrists that were doing that study about just the soothing effects of people just saying the divine name and it is true. I once met somebody, she was given the name, she didn't know it, she didn't know what it was, she was told repeat la ilaha ilal Allah over and over for depression as a treatment. She got cured of her depression and she ended up becoming a Muslim but she didn't even know. She told somebody that her psychiatrist gave her this amazing formula to say. He told her do it in the morning preferably before the sun comes up and in the evening before she went to sleep for about half an hour. She would do that and she said she started to feeling better. She said what was it? He said that is the Muslim creed. That is a true story, she died rahimullah but I met her in England. She was an English lady from Liverpool.

So when we go into tawheed, understanding God. One of the things they point out that I think is very important is that there some Muslims that believe that God is something else and there is also non Muslims that think Allah is something else. I saw a Christian and a Muslim having a dialogue. The Christian said "I just have to say that I don't believe in the God you believe in". If you read certain Christian literature about Islam they will say that Muslims believe in another God like the moon God or whatever God. There are Muslims that think the Christians because they believe in the trinity that they believe in another God. Now the point that that Quran makes when it says let us look upon what we agree upon before we discuss anything else that we worship only one God. The understanding there is are we talking about the Creator of the heavens and the earth? Yes then we are talking about the same God. What we are differing on is the particulars, the universal we agree on. But we begin to differ when we look at what is our concept is of that God.

Christians believe God is One, they do not believe God is three. They really do not. They do believe God is three, He is One but He is tripart in this mystical mysterious way and they will never explain it and they believe in One God. They are not idolaters like that, they believe in one God and the Jews definitely believe in one God. In Judaism there is some anthropomorphism

where you begin to describe God as human having hands and feet and limbs and things like that which is haraam to do that. You cannot do that. One thing that Ghazali says that the word in Arabic for hands has 17 meanings yet which one are you going to choose that God meant? In other words do not interpret that. Leave it the way it is but we know it does not mean this with absolute certainty. We now that when God says hand of Allah, He is not talking about something like this (holds up hand). We know that. There is a universal, there is nothing like God and therefore it is not like this because if I said that I am saying that God is like His creation which is impossible.

So when we look at the word God in the Quran, Allah is used. Now the Orientalists say it is obvious this is from ilah. Well that is not obvious to the Muslims. Muslim theologians do not think Allah is from ilah. People say it is from the same letters. It is like saying Arizona is from arid zone, it is a dry area. It looks just like it. You are making up an etymology that is not there. So the Muslims prefer just to say Allahu Alim where Allah comes from, the word itself. Some says ul illah then it got what they called the idghaam where you say Allah. Most of the ulema including Imam Suyuti say the word Allah does not come from any other word. It is not derived from any. It is ism alam, that is what they call it, it is a proper name.

Now before we can understand really, how we understand God, the important thing is how we do not understand God. That is why he goes into this idea of shirk. One of things that he and she point out before that which is important is the idea of ilah. In the Quran ilah which can have a plural is called alihat, gods and gods as well as goddesses and things. The word ilah is used sometimes positive, sometimes negative. It basically means the objective of devotion or worship. In the Quran it says that there are those that take their own desires as gods beside Allah. In fact, the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) in a hadith that Imam Qurtabi relates says “the thing Allah hates, the idol that Allah hates more on the earth that is worshipped is man’s own desire” which is very interesting because most people do not think of idolatry as being something inside of you, they see it as something outside. You have to have a stone or a wooden form or something, a cow, an object of worship but the Quran says “have you not considered the one who has taken as his God his own desires”. His own caprice, his own whims.

That is very interesting because that is the thing that is the most difficult to remove. That is the real shirk that becomes difficult. Worshipping our opinions because we become absolutely devoted to them. We are not willing to give them up for anything. We will even die for them. That is a God beside Allah. There are many idolaters amongst Muslims from that category, may

Allah protect us from that. Many Muslims do not realise that they fall into that category. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “somebody who is addicted to drugs is like the worshipper of an idol” because you will do anything for your God. There are people who will kill for drugs literally kill for drugs. Money, people will kill for money. Desires, it is just for desires not the object of desire. What is forcing someone to steal? It is inside, it is not outside. The object is called cause occasionalis, a good latin word in logic, it is the occasional cause, it is not the deep cause. The deep cause is desire because another person sees the object, they do not have any money, they might even want it but they do not steal it. Why? Because they are in control of their desire. So when the object outside, it is only seen, the delusional state is “I had to have it”. That is what made me do it. No, it was inside from the beginning, that desire was there and that was only the exciting cause, it was not the deep cause. The deep cause is covetousness for the things of the world.

So shirk in the Arabic language means to share, to be a partner, to make someone share, to give someone a partner, to associate someone with someone else. Shareeq, literally, this my partner in commerce. You are sharing. Musharqa, if we share things, food, conversation, whatever. So the idea of associating or sharing with God something which is God's alone. This is why the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said that Allah said in a hadith qudsi “whoever associates, I have no need of those partners”. So if you associate with Allah partners, you have associated with Allah what He does not need. Why do you go into partnerships? Because you need them. In commerce why do you have partners? Because you need them. So Allah is saying you are associating with Me something I have no need of and therefore it is batil because there is no purpose.

So shirk is the reverse side of tawheed. Now the literal sense of the term shirk may suggest that one has to be conscious of associating other than God in order to be guilty of it. How can I give a partner to someone if I do not know the someone? Well that is actually true and that is why the Quran says “do not associate with God once you know”. That is why a person whose in that state without knowledge is forgiven. But once it has been explained to you, then after that you are taken to account for your knowledge and that is why the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) in hidden shirk taught us to say “O Allah I seek refuge in You from associating with You and I am aware of it, I ask forgiveness for that which I am not aware of”.

There are subtle things that modern psychology called the subconscious mind. The Muslims understood this. The Quran says “they are not conscious of it, they attempt to deceive God and

those who believe but they only succeed in deceiving themselves, but they are unaware. The modern Arabic word for the subconscious *la shuhur* which is exactly the way Allah describe the state of hypocrite except he is not aware.

Now the thing about *la shuhur* the subconscious is there is an understanding in the Islamic tradition that in a truly deep sense you are aware. It is not an excuse. That is why the Quran says in the next world people will say “would we have only listened and comprehended what was being said to us we would not have ended up in this wretched place?”. Then Allah says “they finally admit they are wrong”.

These defence mechanisms of projection and denial and all these things that human being do are essentially according to Islamic understanding, they are still responsible for it. The reason for that is this power that Allah has given us it is just too vast and too enormous. If you do not make use of it, then only you have yourself to blame. All the tools were given to you so it is like someone is given a plot of land. They have the cow, they have the plough and they just sit there and watch it. Then when the harvest comes and everyone else is harvesting and they are saying “Nothing grew”. Well you had the seed, you had the plough, you had the cow, why didn’t you do anything? “O you mean I should have done something?”.

Rumi has a poem about the day of judgment. He says on that day you will come with your head bowed and you will look at the Prophets and say get me out of this mess, the mud of my life because I am mired in the mud of my life. He says “you left the plough in the middle of the field and now you want us to harvest for you”. You had all that time, you had all that energy.

So there is a belief in Islam that *tawheed* is from the *fitrah* of human. It is something we deeply know. It is in our inherent nature to know. That is why children will completely accept the understanding. They will just completely accept it. They will accept *tawheed*. It makes perfect sense to them.

Now the idea of hidden *shirk*. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) came out, this is a hadith that Ibn Majah relates, the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) came out and they were talking about the anti-Christ and he said “shall I tell you about something that is more frightening to me than the anti-Christ?”. They said what. He said “hidden *shirk*, *riyaa* that a man should

perform prayer and do it beautifully for the sake of someone who is watching”. Sahdi tells the story about the man in the mosque praying and he hears the door open and he decides that I am going to pray a long time because that person will think...and when he finishes his prayer, he looks to see if the person saw him and it was a dog that came into the mosque. You see it is all in your head. It is not about what is out there, it is all your perception.

Now this is my favourite section here which is the signs of God. The Quran is called qalamullah which is God’s speech directed at human beings so whatever is said in the Quran we believe is an expression of God Himself. In the same way when we speak we express ourselves. So I speak I am expressing myself.

We may be playing a role and no one else will play the role in the same way. Every role we play we express something about ourselves. Kenneth Branagh’s Hamlet is not Laurence Olivier’s. Same text but they have different interpretations. So even an actor reciting the same line, he is still expressing himself. So the idea of words being an expression of the nafs according to the Quran when Allah speaks we believe it is an expression of Himself in the Quran. The Quran expresses Allah. It is not the only thing that expresses Him. Other scriptures also express him and so do His creatures.

So now we get into something very interesting which is this idea of the expression. What is an expression? It is when I speak what I am doing, I am articulating symbols. If you speak my language, you are familiar with. So when I say “look at that tree” I do not have to look at the tree. You will begin to look around at the tree. You can ask me which tree but when I say tree an image emerges in your mind of something which has a trunk, branches and leaves. If it doesn’t have a trunk, branches or leaves it is something else. It might be a bush but when I say tree that is what comes to your mind. If I say in Arabic to an Arab tree he will say what are you talking about it? I will say shajarah.

Now shajarah to an English speaker does not mean anything but to an Arab speaker he has the image in his mind that you had when I said tree. So what is shared? It is the tree but what else is there? What is the nature of language is that it is a symbol, it is a sign that signifies something else. This is called in Arabic an ayah. So an ayah is something that signifies something else. Now when we say that God has signs what we are saying is there are things that signify a God. There are the prophetic signs, the revelatory signs but then there are the natural signs so ayah in the

Quran means in a general sense anything that means something else. Anything that indicates something else. This is what ayah means. So that is a general sense. In the Quran it means everything in the heavens and earth, everything is a sign and this is why We appointed the night and day as two signs. The day and night are two signs, of what? Of God. A sign for them is the dead earth, from amongst those signs the dead earth and then it is brought back to life. That is a sign of God, you are seeing a sign, it is indicating something else.

Amongst His signs are ships that run on the sea like landmarks that is on the ocean like a landmark, like mountains, these are all signs. In the earth are signs for those who have certainty and in yourself. In the earth are signs and in yourself are signs. Do you not see? In other words, do you not make the connection in the same way when I said tree you connected that with this thing that has trunk, branches, leaves. This is what Allah is saying, do you not see the connection between all the signs out there and all these signs in here, what they are indicating? What they mean.

The second narrower sense is the miracles and scriptures given to the Prophets so Prophets are given two types of signs:

1. Scripture which is an ayah
2. Things that break the normal chain of events so with Moses, it was his staff. It was his sign and the magicians recognised. That is why when they saw it they said “We believe in His God” not in you because they knew. Firoun said “this is a conspiracy” this is what he said. “You planned this, this is a conspiracy you did somewhere else”. He cannot believe because he is not seeing the same thing.

The other is the wahy itself, the revelation is a sign. They said to Prophet Salih (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) “you are merely one of us who are bewitched, you are a mortal like us. Produce a sign if you are truthful” so they want a sign. People, they want signs. This is what they said to Jesus (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). He said “wicked is a generation that want signs”. In other words, it is so clear like Lut, someone asked him “what is a proof for the existence of God?”. He said “you are asking for a lamp to see the sun”. That is what the Arabs say “nothing will make sense to you if you need a proof for daylight”.

This idea of signs which is very interesting because the essence of 20th century philosophy is semiotics. They have become obsessed with signs. This is what philosophy has been reduced to which is very interesting that the question, that is what it is talking about, it is talking about signs.

That is why one of the brilliant philosophers of the 20th century was Izuzu a Japanese philosopher. He spent his life studying the Quran and wrote this amazing book on the signs, the semiotics of the Quran because he was just so engrossed in this idea.

So now the most specific sense of the word is the Quran, the actual sentences of the Quran which is called ayat the actual syntactical components. They are meaning statements that are called ayat. Now use of the really interesting things about signs and I just want you to think about this and everybody has had the experience when you do not know a word and suddenly you look it up in the dictionary and now you know it and then suddenly it starts appearing everywhere. You are like that is amazing, what a coincidence. Why does it suddenly start appearing everywhere? Because now you know what it means. Suddenly it becomes meaningful and before you were just knowing it from your field of vision. Now you are allowing it in because you have accommodated it into your frame of reference.

Now one of the things about human beings. If you are traveling on a trip and I love road signs. I just got a traffic ticket yesterday in San Jose. He actually reduced it way down because I told him this is a crazy city and how do you get out of this city once you are in it because that song “do you know the way to San Jose”. You don’t know where you are in that society, it is just crazy and I told him. He said “didn’t you see that sign?”. I said “no I didn’t see the sign?”. “Why didn’t you see it, it was right in front of you”. I really didn’t see the sign. It is as clear as the day. “That is what the angels say to people, didn’t you see the sign? It was right in front of you”. Why? You know why I didn’t see the sign, because there was a mailman in front of me going like this (motions) there is a cop behind you, don’t turn left. He distracted me from seeing the sign. That is what Iblees does, you don’t see the sign.

Ignorance is not an excuse in the eyes of the law. You have a drivers licence, you are driving a car. There are signs, you are supposed to know what they mean. You took a test to prove that you know what they mean. Then you are going to plead ignorance. I did not see it. Well you should be more attentive. This is what he is saying so he wants to write you a ticket and then you have

to pay a fine. When I said hey, he said this is my job to write tickets. That is what the angels say, I am just doing my job. My job is to punish you. That is what he was saying to me. My job is to punish you not to sit here and debate. You broke the law. It is an infraction and that is my job and I am sorry. It is a painful thing to do if I really think about it but it is my job. There you go, so what can I do? Rip it up, the police take your car away. If you ignore the warnings, that is just a warning, if you ignore that there are more repercussions. It just gets worse and worse and worse.

So imagine humanity on this highway. You are driving along. The first sign they see Lustville, 100 miles. Suddenly speeds up, only 100 miles, if I do 100 miles an hour, I will get there in an hour. On the way there is a sign Paradise and it is pointing that way to turn. Does he see that sign? No because he is so preoccupied with Lustville. He cannot see the sign to Paradise. And then there is another sign Gluttonyland so maybe he is a glutton. Gluttonyland I am going there. Floors it, can't wait to get there to eat so he does not see the sign to Paradise. Each one of the signs that people see on the road and they cannot see the other sign because they are so preoccupied with their destination but they chose that destination.

Now if you were given a job and this is Vanity Fair. I think it is Thackeray or whoever wrote it. The story of vanity fair where the man was given a job by the King but on the way to fulfill his job there is a fair on the side of the road and he thinks I have all the way to sunset so I am just going to stop and just enjoy the show and there are some distractions and I will have a little fun then I will go and do what the King told me to do. So he goes in and Vanity Fair filled with distractions. He is having a great time and he gets too engrossed in all of these distractions that suddenly it is sunset and Vanity Fair is closing up and he has not done what he was supposed to do. Now he has to go back to the palace and tell the King. The King says "I sent you in the morning, you had all day to do it". Is the King going to accept the excuse that I saw this beautiful fair on the side of the road. On my time? You were playing on my time?

Somebody works for Fedex but he has a gambling problem so he goes out in the morning with all these packages and then he passes by a gambling casino. I will just go in and do one time on the slot machine. He goes in one time and then suddenly one time leads to another and then suddenly the day is over, he goes out and he has all these packages he has not delivered that he has to take back, is he going to keep his job. No. So that is the nature of the world. The task is very clear but the signs are ignored. It is not as if they are not there. They are just ignored and that is why how many a clear sign there is in the heavens and earth that they pass by, turning

away from it. It is all there. It is very obvious. That is what the Quran is saying. The people ignore these signs because they do not have time for them. They are too occupied with their worldly things, making more money, getting that bigger house, enhancing my portfolio, building up my CV.

Chapter 6

The beauty of Islam is it does not turn away from the world. It says be in the world like a stranger, just know that you are not going to be here forever and then act accordingly because a stranger does not behave like other people. You come into a village and you are passing through it, you do not set up shop, marry and have a family in the village when you know that you are going to leave. I am not saying that it means that you do not do that in the world but you do it with that understanding that there are things I am going to leave behind so that you do not become totally obsessed and attached to them.

Questions & Answers

Words have an intrinsic value in themselves but their purpose is to signify something else definitely and there is a correlation. He goes into a little bit, but he is taking it from a 13th century Andalusian scholar philosopher who thought that the world was composed of letters. Like DNA you have four nucleic acids and these four nucleic acids combine into 64 possible combinations. Those 64 possible combinations then translate out into certain structures and that is what gives things their uniqueness but it is all based on the same basic building blocks of life. Basically it is the same thing, everything has the same DNA. So his idea was everything in the world is a manifestation of speech and the letters they were like DNA so liver is a certain combination and in every body it will be the same combination. Any creature that has a liver, the liver is composed of the same archetypical letters. It is a philosophy. I don't know what his proofs were from the Quran or anything like that. I am sure he had them. It is an idea but the world alam in Arabic means sign. Alam is ism f'al. F'al is the thing that you do something with like tabih is the thing you seal with so alam is the thing that you know something by. The world is that by which you know, the alim, the knower who is Allah. The difference is between fathah and kasrah between God and the world. So if you have that faith from the world then you get opened up to see the truth of the world which is that it is an ayah of God.

What kind of desires are halal? What kind of desires are haram?

I mean the desires are not bad things. Desires generally unless it is things that are haraam in shar'iah, the desire for food is a good desire. If you do not have the desire for food, you will die but if you have desire for pork then you have a problem or if you have a desire for excessive food that is going to harm you, you have a problem. It is not haraam to overeat but it is makruh. But if you do it until it damages your health and the doctors tell you, you have to cut down your food consumption then it becomes haraam because "don't kill yourselves". They say most people dig their graves with their teeth.

Can you divorce a person who has haraam desires? Is this a good reason for divorce?

If it is things that are prohibited and they want that person to partake in that, it is haraam to do that, that would be grounds for divorce if the person was forcing them to do something or demanding them to do something like rectal intercourse.

What are the natural signs of God beside nature?

The natural signs of God are other than Prophets and revelation so everything other than Prophets and revelation is a sign. Our own souls are signs of God, ourselves. The fact that we are hearing, seeing and living, all these things. These are signs of God. Sight, speech, understanding, comprehension.

Question about the Japanese philosopher Isuzu

He has a book the Quranic Veleter Chalen. He spoke like 32 languages or something, phenomenal intellect. The book is called Quran veleter Chalen which is German word for world view and he has another book on the ethical.....If you are interested in his books you can get them through Fons Vitae on the web.

Can someone say shahada on the phone?

You need witnesses, you can say the shahada wherever you want to but to make it sound you need witnesses, two witnesses so it would be better to do it in person. If you are living on a desert island with a cellphone and there was nobody there, and you want to say shahada so you called a Muslim country and asked for a second operator to come on or something like that then you could do that. It is a good question.

Cannot hear question clearly

Lichtenstein at the end of his life did not speak because he did not believe you could say anything true in a language and he was a philosopher of language. The whole world is running or not running, it is actually probably not running because of language as well as it is running because of language. The problem is language, communication. Rumi one of my favourite stories of Rumi is one of the three, there is an Arab, a Persian and a Roman. They are traveling together on a road and they come across this dirham. They all grab at it at the same time. The Arab says we have to buy enab with it. The Persian says no we buy angoor, the Roman says no we are going to buy venatas. They are all words for grape so they start fighting each other and Rumi's comment is all that was needed was a good translator.

Part of the problem is language, one of the things they point out here that I really believe in is that when people say I don't believe in God, Muslims should say what is your definition of God because I do not believe in that God either. A lot of people do not believe in an unbelievable God. That is true but in dealing with somebody who is trapped in that rejection of language....you have to establish first that language can....if I tell him to stand up and he stands up, that my language has been meaningful enough to make him do and act and therefore something that has meaning can be conveyed in language and can be demonstrated very easily and that language is meaningful. If he means that we cannot use language to speak about transcendent truth which is the idea of logical positivism which is another modern aberration, the idea that any metaphysical language is meaningless that we can only speak about material and concrete things. That is also very problematic because the human mind has universals and yet you will never see a universal but when I point to a particular tree that is not the universal tree. That is one particular tree so there are even within language abstract things that we recognise to be true that indicate a shared or common thing that particular all share.

I have gone out and watched trees. Trees are very interesting things. I have gone just walking and looking at all these different trees realising each one of them is completely unique and feeling whoever invented this idea of a universal tree, it is not true, because every human being on this planet is unique yet we share the fact that we are human beings although I cannot point to your particular example as a human being.

We have a concept in our mind of what is human that is not to be seen in the world and universals you cannot find them and yet the mind recognises them. That is a metaphysical concept because it is beyond the material world, the universal concept. The idea of God, the brain is wired for it, simple as that.

There is a book “Why God will not go away” and it is the neurobiology of belief. People are wired to believe and there is truth in that, simple as that and people do have belief. Unfortunately you get caught in these mind games. I think ultimately for me it was a car accident. Sometimes it takes real powerful shocks to wake people up put of that type of slumber. Shaykh Saeed Ramadan says for the Muslims the atheists are signs of God just the fact that somebody can deny God in this world it is a proof not only of God but that He is merciful and compassionate. That he can walk around and say it with impunity “I don’t believe in God”. Some of them will do that “I don’t believe in You”. What is that? Then they will say “no lightning bolt came down”. People say that “there is no God, strike me down now strike me down. God if You are really there do it”.

God is Merciful. Sidi Ahmed Zarruq said for him one of the biggest proofs of God was sailors because he said they are some of the worst people on the planet and he said yet that can safely cross an ocean. No offence to any sailors. In English, they say his language is so bad that he could make a sailor blush and port cities are famous.

How do we know we are forgiven after tawbah?

We should assume that because the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said Allah says “I am in the opinion of My servant” which means if you made a sincere tawbah and you don’t believe God forgave you, He will not forgive You. But if you believe He did, He will if it is a sincere tawbah.

Some of the words that the Quran uses for those who can discern signs or who can understand signs and one of the fundamental points that the Quran makes, is that there are two types of people. There are people who reflect on the signs and then there are people who ignore the signs. They ignore the signs to their own detriment. The Quran also gives us a clear picture of the results that happen from people that ignore the signs and those signs to both effects in this world and also effects in the next world. So for instance the Quran gives a lot of signs of what happens to societies when they are irreligious and begin to deviate from the path that Allah has given them. Consistently the Quran is saying “travel in the land and look at the people who went before you, look at how they built buildings that you built and yet they came to nought because ultimately they began to disbelieve in the signs of Allah”. The analogy that the Quran strikes is of the city “Allah strikes the similitude of the city or the likeness of a city, it was safe, content and then its provision would come from all over and this was really to the Meccan people, reminding the Meccan people and then the Quran says that “they began to deny the bounties of Allah”, In other words they forget that Allah was the Provider. That is what happens when you ignore the source of the blessing and begin to see yourself or your society as being the providers of whatever you have done. There are people who see their work as being the reason they are getting something out.

So the Quran uses certain words in relation to these two signs. The signs being out there and in ourselves. Those are the natural signs and then the signs of the revelation. The Quran uses the word *akala* which means “don’t you use your intellects” so the *aql* which is the component that Allah has given man is there to be able to comprehend. So the idea of using your *aql* and Allah says He gave you hearing, sight and a heart. The *ulema* say the reason that these three are mentioned together is because the ways in which knowledge comes into you are through your sight and sound. They are signs in themselves but it is through the sight and the sound. That is why Allah says that are signs “don’t you see them?” in Surah Mulk when Allah says that the people in hell say “had we only listened” and you will see these two attributes. Allah says “We gave them sight in order that they show gratitude” so the idea of showing gratitude through these capacities so the idea of showing gratitude through these capacities that Allah has given you to perceive these.

So the *aql* is rooted in the *fu’ad*, that is the Quranic view “they have hearts but they cannot perceive with their hearts”.

The second, the idea of understanding. Allah gives the human being the ability to use the intellect to understand meanings and so you have faham, and also you have the fiqh in the Quran which is the faqih in old Arabic was the one who could discern a pregnant animal in the midst of a herd. It was the one who could see what was not apparent to others and the faqih has a perception that the other people do not have.

When the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “whoever Allah wants good for He gives him the understanding of the deen”. Even though it has come to mean jurisprudence it really does not mean it in that hadith. In that hadith, it means they are able to comprehend the purpose of the deen and obviously the usooli the real faqih not the one who knows the ahqaam but the one who knows how to apply Islam in the world irrespective of the circumstances. That is the real faqih. Then also tafakara, fakara is a negative word in the Quran, it is only used once with Al Waleed. Tafakara which has to do with struggling with thought in other words attempting to understand, fakara is to produce thought whereas tafakara is to attempt to understand. Waleed al Mughirah was someone who was thinking what could he say about the Quran. Is it magic? Is it this, is it that? And so the takafar is reflection, it is the idea of something enters into you and then you being to attempt to understand what that means, that is what tafakar is whereas fakara is coming out of you projecting onto something else. It actually has the opposite meaning, it is you projecting into something else whereas takafar is you allowing something to stimulate in you a desire to understand it at its real level and then also you have tadakarah which is recollection which is very important concept in the Quran because there is an idea in the Quran that human beings really do have an understanding of what this is all about in the innermost and there is a type of forgetfulness that has come over human beings because they have come into the world and so the Quran gives this idea that this is a dhikr, it is actually a reminder of something you already know “remind them because reminders benefits believers”.

You can only be reminded of something you already know and so there is this understanding that all of these things and so there is this understanding that all of these things we are being taught, we actually already know them and so it becomes a recollection that we are really recollecting something that the human being has already perceived.

Then tawasama is another, wasama is a sign as well and tawasama is to perceive the meaning of a sign and again the mutawasim was somebody who could see from the face of a person whether they were good or bad. That was the jahil understanding of a mutawasim, it was someone who could see what was hidden behind the apparent.

If you look at all these words and these ideas they are all revolving around the same idea, that the world is signs and what human beings are is interpreters of signs and Allah has given human beings what is in the Quran lubb, qalb, fu'ad, aql – there are all these different words that are nuances of the same meaning.

Lubb: the people that have lubb, the word lubb, if you look at the root meaning, it is a seed and again the idea it is a pith, it is something obviously, when you say pithy, it is deep because the seed is buried deep in the centre of something that contains the whole thing in other words the lubb is like the seed of a tree, the entire tree is contained in the seed, in the same way in the human being, there is something at the essence of the human that contains this knowledge of Allah and of the universe. Then in terms of ayahs, there are different types of ayahs. There are ayahs of naimah, so there are signs of Allah's blessing. Good health, al afiyah is a sign of Allah's blessing, it is a ni'mah, all these types of things are signs that Allah has given you blessings.

The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “true wealth is contentment” so somebody who does not desire is really the wealthy person. If someone has a great deal of wealth and yet they are still filled with desire and trying to acquire more and more then they are not wealthy according to our understanding.

Then rahma is mercy and there is a belief that at the root of this entire universe is mercy. Ar Rahman is really the essential attribute that Allah is giving to His creation and at the essence of the Prophet's (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) being is rahmah. “We only sent you as a mercy to all of the worlds”.

So there are all of these signs in the world that are signs of His mercy. Ibn Abbas said when you reach a level of perception everything becomes mercy in other words you do not see anything other than mercy because even in the punishments that Allah inflicts on human beings they are much less than we deserve. In that is a mercy so you begin to actually see that Allah is a Merciful Lord that at the root of His tribulations in the world is actually mercy more than anything else.

Then also there is tabshir which is the idea of Allah giving bushra. If you do this then this happens. If they believe then Allah will give them reign, He will increase their crops, all of these things. There is tabshir in the Quran so there are signs of tabshir.

On the other hand there are signs of intiqam which is that Allah takes vengeance. So Allah will avenge His people so if they are righteous people that are persecuted for their righteousness then there is a belief that Allah is a personal God in that He will actually take vengeance upon those who oppress and persecute so that it is a warning.

So these become warnings and again these are signs as well even though it is very difficult for you to discern. It is not really permissible in shariah to look at something in that sense and that is because he did this and this. It is something according to the Quran is a possibility that should be considered.

So whenever anything happens to people that is terrible they should always consider the possibility that this is from their own hands, it is what their own hands have wrought and it is a very important idea in the Quran.

Iqab comes from a word aqaba which is what comes after so iqab is a punishment is a result of prior actions. So you do not see the punishment as arbitrary tyranny that there is something cruel here no, you see the punishment as a direct result and therefore what Allah says in the Quran again and again is that He does not oppress His servants.

Then also you have adhab and adhab is a direct result of also of those who transgress and then indhar which is very important because just as you have tabshir you have indhar. Just as you have glad tidings you have a warning. The Prophets are unique in that they have tabshir and indhar – in other words they warn and they give good news. You will also see in the Quran whenever there is a verse that deals with punishments it will also be followed by a verse that deals with mercy. You will never see verses in the Quran separate like that that you will always see that there is a promise. So this is called wa'ad and wa'eed. You have the promise of if you do right then you get the promise of the righteous which is that Allah accepts you and blesses you. If you do wrong then you have this indhar this warning that there is a retribution, there is requital.

Then the human response to all of these because this is all happening out there, I mean this is the world. There are wonderful things happening and there are terrible things happening. So the human response to these events in the world is one of two. There is only two possibilities. It is either tasdiq or taqdeeb. Either you believe these signs or you deny them. So those who deny them will turn signs into arbitrary meaningless events which is what nihilism does. We reduce events to chance and accident, that we do not live in a moral universe, that our actions do not have repercussions in the world. If they do, those repercussions are arbitrary repercussions. They are not repercussions that have any significance in a cause and effect type of relationship with any moral component there but rather cause and effect as a certain aggregate of certain variables that come together and then something happens that so crime does pay, it does not always pay but it can pay if it is organised, it usually pays very well,

So that type of attitude that they have, the people that deny these signs. The people that accept the signs are people that believe the universe is meaningful that we are living in a world where everything that happens has both existential import so me as in individual my life is meaningful. The events that happen in my life are meaningful, they are not arbitrary events. Then we see this is a collective group in other words groups as collective groups of people have courses. The courses that they take will determine outcomes as a collective group and this is when you get into the idea of clans, cities, countries or states. An actual country can bring upon the wrath of God and because they bring this upon them they are taken to account as an aggregate not as individuals and that is why the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “that when the punishment of Allah comes it afflicts the good and bad”. It afflicts everybody. The Quran says “you should fear and guard yourselves from calamities that do not just affect the oppressors among you”. The reason for that verses that if only the oppressors were ever harmed by wrong in the world then no one would have nay cause to stop wrong in the world. They would simply wait until the oppressor got what was coming to him but once you begin to understand that wrong in the world affects everybody and therefore the kind of modern concept “well as long as I do not hurt anybody then it is alright” but from the Islamic cosmology that any wrong that is done openly and in public that is not rejected by society will actually affect the society even if it is not harming anybody per se.

There is no apparent harm but the reality of it is that it does take its toll and eventually it begins to corrode the society until all those signs that come in civilisations in the past begin to happen and then the civilisation will disappear, be overrun by the hordes. If you want to go into Ibn Khaldun’s philosophy that societies decay and then they are invaded by hordes and then the hordes will tend to reinvigorate the society so America gets invaded by the hordes of the south or

something if you want to look at Pat Buchanan's type of scenario of what is coming that south America and Mexico overrun in America but then from that comes a reinvigoration. That is projection. In the past it would be things like Moghal hordes coming down and completely decimating the Muslim societies but from the Moghal sprung this entirely invigorated Muslim culture and civilization so they ended up being a blessing whereas you cannot see the blessing when it is happening. All you can see is the massacre and the slaughter and this is the part of the thing the Quran reminds us "do not judge things because you cannot see the whole picture" so you might think something is terrible when it is happening. That is why the Quran says "sometimes you detest things and yet they are very good for you" so you can see something in the short term. The short vision of something you see it happening and you think it is terrible but then in the end it actually becomes something that there is a lot of blessing in it. That is why it is always important to wait and to withhold judgment because ultimately it is only understanding the things in its entirety, can you judge it. That is why the people of bayan which is one of the sciences of rhetoric in Islam they say "before you can judge something you have to conceptualise that thing in its entirety" that you cannot make a judgment about a thing if you only understand one facet of it. You really have to be able to comprehend it. That is why ultimately it is God alone that can judge humanity see we can only judge by what is apparent. That is a limited type of judgment but it is only God alone who can judge human beings because He is the only One that can encompass all of the facets and variables involved in judging.

So the immediate consequence of the human response which is one of two things is either gratitude or ingratitude. That is the human response. You are either grateful which is called as-shakir or a mumin or you are an ingrate which is called a kafir. This is the only two outcomes of interpreting the signs that are in the world. For the one who has gratitude because he wants to maintain this state this causes this person to enter into what is called a state of taqwa. Taqwa is protecting yourself from losing what you have and the way that you do that is by maintaining gratitude because the Quran says "if you show gratitude I will continue to bless you" but when you stop showing gratitude then those blessings stop. That is why Ibn At'illah said that "the hobbling cord of blessings is gratitude".

If you have an animal and you want to make sure it does not go astray you hobble its legs. He said "hobbling cord of blessing is gratitude". Therefore if you are not showing gratitude you allow your blessings to wander off. You are not protecting them and the final result of this is iman or kufr. The results of iman or kufr are jannah or jahanaam.

Before we go back to the book, I just want to look at because I think this is very interesting presentation of guidance that Raghav il Hisbahani gives. What he says is the highest thing in the Quran really the highest thing is called tawfique. This is the highest state a human being can be in the state of what is called tawfique.

The word in Arabic tawfique comes from a root word which means to correspond with. Muwafaqa means a correspondence. The definition of tawfique is that the will of the human being corresponds with the will of God and that comes about by following the guidance and guidance according to the Quran has three degrees in this world. There are three degrees of guidance.

The first is knowing good and evil. So that is a level of guidance even if you do not act upon it. The Quran says we have guided the human being to the two paths of good and evil. So every human being has been guided to this understanding of right and wrong and that is the nature of the soul and the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was once asked that “what is a wrong action?”. A wrong action was that which you did that caused trouble in the breast in other words your heart was troubled by it. That is the nature, the fitrah this natural state of a human being is when they do wrong and are troubled by it.

Human beings have different strategies of dealing with that trouble and obviously alcohol is one of them, drugs, being immersed in the world, looking for affirmation. There are people that are doing really wrong things and they tend to hang out with people who do really wrong things because that confirms that they are alright.

In Operation Candyman which is the operation of trying to find all these paedophiles. In the interview they had with one of these FBI agents they said these guys know what they are doing is wrong and the reason they need to be connected to the internet is to try and fee a little better about it. That is a very Islamic insight into the nature of wrongdoing, you want to be in bad company....he is doing it as well so it cannot be that bad. That is why one of the worst things in the Islamic tradition is to wrong publicly because what it does is it causes people to think that the wrong is not that significance. That is why it is so dangerous and one of the French ethicists said “hypocrisy is a homage that vice pays to virtue”. That is very similar to an Islamic understanding.

In this culture there is this idea that it is better to let it all hang out, let it all out, don't feel bad. The Catholic Church, they used to absolve sins by making you do hail Mary's and all these things. In this culture sins are absolved by telling you they are not sins. This is what happens is we say no it is okay nothing is wrong with you. But he is feeling there is something that is wrong that is why he is at the psychiatrist. The psychiatrist is saying "don't feel bad about yourself, you have low self esteem". Well why does he have low self esteem? Because the society is telling him this. Where does all this come from? You see because you get into this chicken/egg thing.

Where does this idea of virtue come from? In other words I mentioned this before, this book of ethics that I took in the University by Chichester, he said that "religion solves the very problems it creates". So religion creates the idea of sin, then it gives you the idea of tawbah or repentance or atonement.

You have to ask the question where did sin come from? Where did this idea come from that human beings knew something was wrong? Why? Because it is in the first story of Cain and Abel. He feels bad after he kills his brother. Why did he feel bad? If we were in a nihilistic world where there is no wrong and right what was in him that made him feel bad? He did something wrong and that is what the soul knows, the soul knows what is wrong and that is why the soul is troubled by it.

So the first is a knowledge of right and wrong. Now there are two ways that that comes about. There is a natural law, which is called fitrah which is the inherent nature that human beings generally know what is right and wrong inherently in the same way that a cat, if you give it food it will eat it in front of you but if it sneaks it, it will grab it and run away. You could say it is because it got hit the last time but even dogs and cats know when they are taking something legitimately and when they are not. So that is the idea that human beings have this understanding.

Now the other is that revelation introduces this understanding so the Prophets bring this understanding of good and evil of khayr and sharh. It is an old problem, the old philosophers talk about the idea – are things good because God says so or did God tell us to do those things because they are good? They idea is something good in of itself or is it good because God says so. The dominant opinion amongst Muslim scholars because they split on this issue, the dominant opinion is that things are good because God says they are. In other words, the intellect

cannot always arrive at what is good that you need this revelation to come in and tell you so there are things that we cannot know and there are things we know. So that is the first one and this is why in the Quran about Thamud which is a people that rejected the signs of God and went astray. It said about them “as for Thamud We guided them but they preferred blindness over their guidance” so they preferred to continue in their error and then it becomes a choice which is very interesting.

One of my boys saw this person smoking and he looked up at that person like perplexed. The person said to him “don’t ever do this”. Then he asked us “why are they doing it?”. In other words if they know it is wrong why are they doing that? This is where human beings become very complicated because despite the fact that they know something they will often go against their best knowledge and this is because of an imbalance in the soul. When rational soul is paramount then these lesser souls, the bestial souls, the irascible and the concupiscent soul, the appetitive soul the lower soul are in a harmony so this rational soul is the controlling factor and this is what Allah calls the aql and tells us to use it. If people capitulate to that then they surrender to the worst qualities of their self and they end up digging themselves down into the worst depths of despair. I mean worst case scenario is terrible but a lot of people kind of survive in this middle ground. There are some that just have completely surrendered and they end up crack, cocaine addicts or whatever just completely devastated by their appetites, alcoholics these types things addicted to all of these attempts at getting them in a state of distraction from questions of ultimate concern.

The second type of guidance is that which the servant is given this maddad or this help, this divine help in stages based on his knowledge or her knowledge and action, right actions and this is what it meant in the Quran when it says “those who took this guidance were increased in the guidance and He gave them this piety, this taqwa”. This comes from a hadith articulated very clearly in which the Prophet(sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “if you move towards God a hand span God moves towards you an arms length, and if you moved to God an arms length, God moves towards you like hands outspread and if you moved towards God walking, God moves towards you running” which is not meant to be understood anthropomorphically that God runs but the idea is that if you do a little bit all of this help comes to increase you. This is the second stage of guidance.

The third stage is noor al wilayah. This is the guidance of a person who has achieved a level of obedience and a state of submission with God that they are in an illuminated state and so their

actions are actions that radiate the light of prophecy and this is why the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said that “pious scholars are the inheritors of Prophets” what they inherit is the light of nubuwah.

So these are these three levels and this is found in the Quran ”if you have piety God will give you true discrimination”. So you will be able to discriminate in your lives. So that is an example of this *huda* that emerges out of a recognition of these signs and then the appropriate response that the signs are given.

On page 55, they give an interesting analogy of the natural world and how Muslims and also Christians and Jews would have looked at it traditionally like this as well and probably the Eastern traditions but this idea of how the modern world is looked at. The way the ancients looked at the world was that it was indicating an implicate order, everything that you saw on the surface indicated something underneath so they saw it as indeed signs indicating something else. Just as you see a tree, if you understand anything about trees you realise the only reason that a tree exists is because it has this massive root structure underneath the ground that you cannot see. Now once that root structure becomes seen the tree dies.

You see the tree dies so the unseen world is really the source of the seen world. The unseen world cannot come into the seen because if it did the seen world has to disappear and so when you look at the seen world what you are really supposed to be recognising is what are the roots of the seen world. The roots of the seen world are the unseen world. That is the real meaning of the seen world and the thing about trees people do not realise this but the root structure is actually more important than the tree because what trees do is they keep the earth, actually hold down soil like mountains, the Quran says the mountains are like pegs and actually prevent the world from shaking and this is something that is known in modern geology so what you see of the mountain, what is more important is not the seen part of the mountain the fact that it is a weighted deep into the earth but you are only seeing the outward, you think that is amazing well you have not even seen the root. That is why the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said the tree that was the most like the believer is the palm tree because it did not have any roots. In other words it was not deeply planted in the material world and yet it is this extraordinary tree that does all this wonderful.....while it is here it does all this wonderful things.

So the two of them say the modern world see what they say is if you went to a museum and saw a painting by Michaelangelo, the question that most people go in there will ask themselves “what is the painter trying to tell me? What is the meaning of this painting?” Or if you heard a poem you could say the same thing. What is the poet trying to tell me? He didn't just make up this stuff. There is something he is trying to convey, a message well what the modern analyses is, is not meaning, what is the painting made of? It is made of canvas. What is the material? Well it is made out of fibres. What is that material? Well it is made of these molecules. What are the actual colours from? Well those are the light reflections and this one is a certain frequency and this why the yellow is showing up and the blue is a certain frequency and so they analyse the painting not for its meaning but just to explain what it is made out of. That is the same way that they look at the modern world. They look out there and they want to just analyse everything but they never tell you what it means. They break it down, it is to reduce things to their components and then we feel like we have achieved an understanding of the thing. Well if you take a human being and take out their eyes, take off their ears, take off their ears, take off their hair, dissect them, open up their interior, examine their kidneys and liver and all these things do you understand what a human being is?

Has that given you the knowledge of what a human being is? Well it has given you a certain knowledge about something about human beings that they are composed of flesh and knowledge, that they have hair, liver, kidneys and the kidney does this and the liver does that. That is a certain type of knowledge but does that tell you about a human being that can think, that can speak, that can write poetry, that can paint pictures, that can play an instrument that can do all these extraordinary things, it does not tell you anything about that human being. Why does he need to do those things? Why do human beings even pursue such pursuits?

So that is the idea of trying to understand signs, it is to look beyond this superficial realm and then he gives this hadith of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). Walking through a town with some companions and he met an old and decrepit woman from one of the tribes who was making wool into thread with a spinning wheel. He greeted her and started speaking to her. He asked her if she had faith in God and she replied that she did. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) asked her why. She said the spinning wheel does not turn unless there is a hand to turn it and the heavens cannot turn unless someone is turning them. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) looked at his companions and said you should have the religion of old women. That is faith and there is another story of Fakhr al Din ar Razi who was walking with some of his students and an old woman saw him and she was amazed at how all these students were fluttering around him and she said who is that? They student said “you don't know who that is?

He has a thousand proofs for the existence of God”. She laughed and said “If he did not have a thousand doubts for His non existence then he would not need a thousand proofs for His existence”. When Fakhr al Din ar Razi heard that he said “you should have the faith of old women”.

You know it is interesting because the whole...the ancients looked at all of the world and said this all indicates God and what the moderns have done what they have said is that we have invented God. God is an invention of man which is an amazing feat I mean that human beings created God in their own image instead of seeing that this whole thing was created to celebrate these attributes of God, it is seen as an illusion that needs to be given up.

Now the next section goes into the divine names. This is actually somewhat a difficult section in that if you look at Hinduism which has this concept of all of these deities. What they do they have Kali and Vishnu they have a deity that represents the creative force of this universe and then they have a deity that represents the destructive force in the universe. The reason for that is people have a difficult time holding opposites in their mind at the same time. So the idea that God is bringing to life and He is taking away life. That the same God is doing these two acts giving life and taking it away and that there is no type of contradiction in that. So the idea of the divine names is to understand all of these attributes of God as being and I do not want to use any analogies but if I was forced to it would be like seeing a diamond that has all these facets to it and whatever facet you happen to be looking at that is the attribute that you are looking at.

There are times when you witness the mercy of God, there are times when you witness the wrath of God and there are other times when you are witnessing the overpowering nature of God. There are other times when you are witnessing the fact that God is the One who abases people and He is also the One who dignifies people so God has all of these attributes and that is what the 99 names are. They are ways of understanding different facets of how the divine is working in the world. That is at the essence of this.

So he and she talks about that when we say God is Merciful that what we are saying is like *ilaha illal Allah*, there is no God but the Merciful and also that there is no mercy but God's mercy. There is none more merciful but the Merciful, so God's mercy overshadows all mercy in the universe and the best way to understand any of these ideas that when we say there is no mercy but God's mercy...in mathematics if you have any number over infinity that number is

zero. So the idea is that anything in the world that resembles an attribute of God in any way is in reality null and void when it is compared to God and that is the meaning of “there is no thing like God” but then immediately after that “He is the hearing and seeing” so the verse gives you there is no thing comparable to God and then immediately after that it gives you two attributes that you can only know because you have them but if you compare your hearing to God’s hearing, it does not exist. If you compare your seeing to God’s seeing it does not exist.

This is the whole section that they try to explain about the idea of the transcendental nature of God and also the imminent nature of God that God is utterly beyond the creation and at the same time God is imminent in creation in other words we can see the works of God in the world but we cannot associate those works with God in reality because the world does not have that of substantial type of existence in relation to God to God’s existence so the being of God and Shaykh Muhammad talked about this last night, the being of our being in relation to the being of God’s being is that we are non existent in relation we exist in relation to the world. In relation to God we do not have substantial existence and that again is a difficult thing for people to grasp because we are not like the Hindus who say this is illusion, it has no existence whatsoever, Muslims do not say that. Muslims say the world has existence but the existence is contingent, it is not absolute. In other words it is contingent upon God’s existence, had God not existed, the world would not exist and as long as God sustains the world and this is the idea of God being Al Qayyum the Sustainer, Al Hayy Al Qayyum. As long as God sustains the world the world exists. The instant that God removes His glance of being onto the world, the world no longer exists.

Then they go into the mercy and the wrath and this is actually very important because the Quran and hadith clearly state that God’s mercy outstrips God’s wrath. The reason for that is mercy is an essential attribute of God whereas wrath is something that occurs as a result of the actions of God’s creation. It is something that is directly related to God’s creation whereas rahma is God’s reality. Again to use an analogy and the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) used this analogy he said he once saw a woman who was suckling her child and he said to his companions “do you think that this woman would throw her child into the fire?”. They all said “no absolutely not”. He said “God is more Compassionate and Merciful with His creatures than this woman with her child”. That is at the essence of God’s nature, is the rahma or the mercy.

What can happen with people, and the reason it is so important to keep mercy and wrath in balance is that if you remove wrath in a balance is that if you remove wrath which is what modern religion has done particularly in the West it has removed the idea of God’s wrath, people

do not even believe in the idea of punishment into the next life anymore. Priests will not talk about it in a lot of parishes because they will lose their parishioners. I have actually been told that a Methodist priest, he was a bishop in the Methodist church and he told me that he can't even talk about things and mention verses anymore because people will not come to church anymore and so God becomes like how we like God as opposed to us being as God would like us to be, we make God the way we want God. We do not reform ourselves to make ourselves like God would like us to be, we reform God so He conforms to our desires and whims. It is amazing what has happened to religion.

Then you have another problem you go to other side of the wrath, and this is the idea of people that want to eliminate everybody who does not agree with their religion because it becomes a hateful thing. You begin to see the wrath of God and you do not see anything else so that is another problem too. Both are one eyes, both are looking with one eye and you are given two eyes. You have to see the wrath and mercy. If you do not, you are in trouble and that is one of the things about Iblees is that Iblees could only see the material nature of Adam, he could not see the spiritual nature.

When in the Quran it says that God said to him why did you not bow down, he said "You created me from fire but You created him from clay. In other words I am a higher element, why should I bow down to him. What Iblees was missing was that the spirit had been blown into Adam but the nature of clay is that it is opaque you cannot see the spirit in the clay. If you have a clay container you cannot see what is in the container. You cannot tell whether it is full or empty like you have a clay jar, you cannot see it whereas if you have a glass jar you could see if there was something in it or not. So when he looked at the human being he could not see the spirit because the spirit was hidden in the material form.

So this idea of the transcendental nature of God and the imminent nature of God and distance you have to have a transcendent understanding of God but at the same time you have to have an imminent understanding because there is a personal relationship that you have but there is also an understanding that God is so beyond the human being. This is the most difficult balance in the Islamic understanding is to keep these two in a balance that one the one hand you cannot in anyway associate God with His creation but on the other hand God is known through His creation so it is keeping those two in balance, it is called fear and hope, mercy and wrath, beauty and majesty. There are many different ways that the scholars looked at it. That is why the attributes of God if you look at the 99 names you have what are called sifat al jamalia and sifat al

jallalia. Dhul Jalaali wal Ikraam. He is Majestic and He is also Beneficent. He is also giving us and this is why He has those two attributes of Majesty and Beauty. If you miss one because you have been blinded by the other you are missing the whole picture and it becomes dangerous theologically and spiritually and in a lot of other ways.

One page 22, he gives a diagram of this idea of these concentric circles and then these lines moving out from the centre. Both of them are not enough, you need the two of them together, you cannot have them separately and that is why on that figure 3 it is a figurative representation. Tawheed and then knowing...Imam Ali said "He is near in His distance and He is far in His nearness". That is a difficult concept of people to Hold but you have to understand it in that way and then another thing in the Quran, the Quran says "I punish whoever I please" but then it says "but My mercy has encompassed all things" and the point that they make from that is that the Quran never suggests that God's wrath is toward all things. It is only towards specific things whereas the universal is mercy but that is permeating the universe is God's mercy. Mercy pertains to the very nature of the real whereas wrath is a secondary attribute that rises up because of specific situations of certain creatures.

So Islam begins with the perception of difference: we are different from God and fear from Him. God is utterly other and created things are totally helpless because of their lack of any positive qualities but the purpose of Islamic teaching is not to leave people in wrath in distance from God but rather take them to mercy or nearness. So people are supposed to do something about their distance and if they do they will move toward nearness so this is drawing near. My servant continues to draw near to Me and then what happens when He finally loves him, He becomes the hand with which he grasps, the eyes with which he sees, the tongue with which he speaks, the ear with which he hears in other words it is total, he is in a state when he is only seeing the actions of God. He is not God but he is perceiving the actions of God in creation in such a profound and deep way that the world becomes a theatre of these divine manifestations.

It is not God, it is not other than God in that if you want to use an analogy. The sun radiates now the rays of the sun we can see them if you are in a certain spot, you can see the sun coming through, that is not the sun but it radiates from the sun and in the same way this creation is not Allah but it is radiating, it is emanating from Allah. It is not Allah but a creation of Allah therefore it is emanating from Allah so it is the ability to see the source behind the light of the world and that is why Allah says "Allah is the light of heavens and the earth". In other words He is the illuminator of the havens and earth so it is the light of Allah that is illuminating the world and then you get into this idea here of light and darkness and they talk about the angels which are the creatures of light. Human beings are creatures of mud but have this light in them which is the

light of intellect. It is the aql. They are not strong but there are traditions that talk about that God created the intellect from light. The aql was made from light. So this is the light that human beings has despite this material nature that there is the light that this human being has.

If you look under section 87 which is that we normally think of light as visible but in fact it is invisible, we can only see light when it is mixed with darkness which is very important. What that means is the creation in that it is other than God is darkness but in that it is radiating attributes of God it is light and this is the mixture of light and darkness in creation which is one of the most extraordinary things about creation that it is this mixture of light and darkness.

At this point I want to look at a verse, to me it is one of the most extraordinary verses in the Quran because it deals with something which would never occur, it is really hard to believe that this would just simply occur to someone in this way. It is a verse from Surah Furqan which means the discrimination. It says have you not considered how your Lord moves shade and had God wanted He would have made it still in one place but shade is moving constantly. If you watch throughout the day and that is one of the beauties of watching your prayer, measuring your prayer by the shadows. You see the movement of the shade. A lot of people do not even notice that, they do not even realise that their shadow is short at midday and as the day progresses it gets long. It begins long, becomes short and then begins to expand again.

Then he says “We made the sun a proof of shade”. Now this is really extraordinary because when I first read that, I said what does that mean? Shade comes from the sun. That is where shade comes from, the sun, so why does it say “We made the sun a proof for it. Then We begin to contrast this little by little. And He is the One who made for you night as a garment in other words you sleep in the night. The darkness of the night is like a garment that envelopes you. We made sleep as a type of hibernation, a time of renewal of recreation. Then We spread the light of the day out so We made the day this spreading of light”.

Now if you look at what Fakhr ad Din says about this. He says:

“Haven’t you considered? He said one of this is the sight of the eye and the other is the side of the heart. The eyes see but again that is a sign that the eye is perceiving and the heart is meant to

interpret the sign so it is important to see that. Real seeing the Quran says “it is not the eyes that go blind but it is the hearts and breasts that go blind” so the real seeing is the sight of the heart.

Then “have you not looked at the shade, how God is moving this shade?”. Now he says this meaning of this ayah and there have been many attempts at understanding this ayah goes back to two meanings. One is that shade is a middle state between pure light and pure darkness. Then he says this is the best of states.

Pure darkness, the nature is averse to it, nobody likes pure darkness and pure light is so powerful that we would be overwhelmed by it and unable to stay in it.

You cannot look at the sun but here you can look at it for a moment and turn away and you will see black dots. But if you go outside of our atmosphere for one moment it would completely destroy your eyesight to even glance towards that direction.

So what he says is because it is the best of all states, paradise is described as being shade everywhere. This perfect state of shade. Then he says if you look at anything in the world you can only see it because of shade so the fact that we perceive the world, we only perceive it because it is an admixture of darkness and light. Had it been pure light we could not have perceived it and had it been pure darkness we would not have perceived therefore God put the sun as an indication of this state that the entire world is in. Had He not done that you would not have considered shade as a phenomenon because we are in shade right now. When you go outside you are in shade. Outside here you are in shade, even when the sun is shining directly on you, you are still in shade. It is an admixture of lightness and darkness because pure light would completely blind you, you would not be able to see anything. So the fact that the entire cosmos is an admixture of these lights and darknesses is a phenomenon that is extraordinary to reflect on that.

That is why as it begins to be taken from us, it goes slowly and so this movement is a way of understanding this blessing and he said this is one of the most hidden blessings of God, most people do not even contemplate the blessing of shade, the fact that they are in shade constantly even they are in the sun.

It is only that they see the shade that they actually can realise that so the Quran is actually telling is to reflect on the fact that the sun is a proof of shade, it is not the cause of shade.

So light is a metaphor in that we understand that darkness is the absence of light and therefore what is other than God is pure absence because God is light. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was asked “did you see God?”. He said “He is light, how can I see God when He is light”. So that the metaphor in the world that we have for God is light. The light of God is not like the light of the world becausebut it is the same way the mercy of the mother is the way we know the mercy of God. The light of the sun is the way we understand the idea that God is light.

Chapter 7

And so the absence of light is darkness, it is nothing and that is why other than God is nothing. This is what the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “the truest thing that a poet ever said what the poet Labib said “everything other than God is unreal” and so what is unreal in the world is the light of God. That is the only thing that gives the world any substance at all and that is why the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “this world is cursed and everything in it is cursed except what reminds you of God and the remembrance of God”. So the world if it is not fulfilling its function which is to remind you of God then it becomes a curse for you. It is not benefiting you it is actually harming you to be in it because the whole purpose of the world is to remind you of God so if when you look out there you are seeing God in other words the light of God in the world which are these ayats, these signs, then you have responded to the world appropriately and you will be requited appropriately.

But if you do not see God and are not reminded of God in the world then you become an ingrate and that is why the verses here about light...are the blind and the seeing man equal or are the darknesses and light equal? And always darknesses when it is related to light, is in plural and light is in singular. “It is He who sends down upon this servant signs, clear expectations that He may bring you forth from darkness into light. Why is he who is dead and We gave him light and appointed for him a light to walk amongst people as one who is from darkness and comes not

forth from them. It is he who performs his prayer over you and His angels that He may bring you forth from the darkness into light”.

So angelic luminosity is a light that is in the world which is the light of the angels and angels according to the Islamic tradition are creatures made of light. Now the difference between demons which are made of fire and angels are very interesting because according to the Islamic cosmology they are made of fire. If you look at fire its nature is chaotic. Fire is not like light. If you want a light beam even the sun or laser we can control light in that it follows very exact laws where fire is chaos theory. That is why in chaos theory they study smoke and light because fire by its nature is chaos, it is unpredictable you do not know what it is going to do and it can spread very easily. You can have a controlled fire but it can get out of hand whereas light is not like that, it does not do that.

So the angels are in a state of total obedience to Allah and then the other thing about fire is that it exists by consuming others. Fire exists by consuming wood. Demons exist by consuming men. This is what they thrive on, this is the hadith about the skinny devil and fat devil. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said there were two devils that met. One of them was about ready to die and the other one was looking really good. The fat one said to the skinny one “what is the matter with you?”. He said “I have a terrible assignment. Every time he eats he says in the name of God. He gets up in the morning and prays. He is also remembering God. I am not getting any nourishment. You see like fire burning wood he is dying. Then the other one says “I have a great assignment. He never remembers God. When he eats he never says in the name of God and I eat with him. Then when he goes to sleep he does not say in the name of God and I get a great nights rest” so the point there is the nature of demonic realm that it thrives. That is why consumer in old English means the devil. That is what it means. You can look it up in the old dictionary. Consumer means the devil because the devil consumes souls. Modern consumers are devils, the Quran says “profligate people are the brethren of the devious” so all this gratuitous consumption, all of this empty...that is what it is, consumption is a disease, I think I might have it.

Then he and she talks about spirits, the nature of the spirits and the jinn. The jinn are important in that they exist alongside human beings. They are created of fire, their father is Iblees. That is the dominant opinion like Adam is our father. Iblees is their father. Some of them are good, some of them are mischievous. They do not disbelieve in Allah. Their disobedience is different from the creatures of Bani Adam, the children of Adam, they do not disbelieve in Allah, they know

that Allah exists, their disbelief is a disbelief of disobedience which for the children of Adam is not a disbelief but it is partly because they are in the unseen realm and they have a lot more information than we do so their reckoning is...they know too much in that way because Iblees knows a lot. Think about shade today.

Any questions?

What is thahir?

Thahir means apparent or outwardly manifest. In the Quran it says “He is the first with no beginning, the last with no end, the outwardly manifest and the outwardly concealed”.

So the meaning is He is apparent to those who can see. If you have this inner eye then you can see this apparence of God that is why for the Gnostics somebody that knows God to deny the existence of God it is like...I think it is the H G Wells story where the man goes into the valley and it is a valley filled with blind people. They say the world is just darkness, he said not it is incredible, there is a light and there are all these colours and there are flowers and look at the mountains and the sky and you people do not have any eyes and they say this man is insane. So they go and start feeling him and they say O that is why, he has got pressure in his brain because of these bulging...so they poke his eyes out. This is the idea for the Gnostic, he is like that man who can see in the midst of blind people that are denying sight because they cannot see and that is the way the Prophets are when they come into this world. Everything is perfectly clear to them and that is why the way they speak is with such intensity, I mean Prophets are intense. If you look at their messages, they are intense because it is so clear to them and they want other people to see what they are, they are healers because they can remove the cataract, they can remove that veiling that is on the eyes. They will not remove it, they will only remove what is necessary because you do not want to have a total unveiling, you cannot handle it, you will go insane and that is why some people end up seeing too much and then they go mad. There is all this religious psychosis, the world is filled with religious psychotics, people that have seen too much. That is why it is dangerous, that is why Islam is a middle way, you do not want to go to this extreme of a religious psychoses.

There are two possibilities to blessings. One of them is for people that show gratitude and they are increased in their blessings and the other are people that are ingrate and they are increased in what the Quran calls istidraj. Istidraj is according to the Quran that “I continue to give them blessings despite their disobedience and I take them by degrees and my strategy or my plan is vast” The same is true when calamities befall. Calamities befall for different reasons. There are different possibilities, with Prophets when calamities befall, there are two reasons, one is called tasliyah which is that other people that follow them the fact that their Prophets have been through so much, they are willing to endure much more. If the Prophets never endured any hardship then the people that follow them when they endure hardship they will lose hope. They will think I am so terrible, I am so horrible, this is why God is doing it to me and so they will go into a wrath only seeing wrath whereas when the Prophets suffer immensely they suffer for us, it is not for them, they do not need it, so their suffering is actually for the people that believe in them in order for them to be able to get through the world in one piece so the Prophet lost all of his children, he buried all of them except Fatimah so if you have 5 children and you lose one and you remember “my God, my Prophet buried 6 of his 7 children” I mean that certainly makes it easier for you to bear that hardship and then you also do not fall into the trap of saying God hates me, that is why He took away my child because we know that God loved the Prophet Muhammad and yet He took all 6 of his 7 children in his lifetime.

So it makes you bear the hardships of this world and also it is what is called taqfir dunboob when hardships befall people that believe in God it is a way of purifying previous wrongs but you can also remove them by taubah. That is why it is good to make taubah. Somebody said when grace meets karma, you don't want to just have all this stuff of the past that you have to deal with, it is better to try and atone for that and give sadaqah, give charity and things to remove those wrongs but it can remove wrongs and then also you get raised in degrees because one of the things about calamities is you always come out enriched by them, it is always hard to see that at the beginning. But there is never a calamity that happens in your life that when it is over you have a whole different perspective on the world that had you not have had that perspective on the world.

There are people that walk though life sleepwalking never appreciating anything they have and then they lose everything and the first time in their entire life they feel grateful for what they had. So the fact that they lost it all if that is what it took to put them into a state of realising that they were in blessings, it is a blessing. There are many possibilities there when things happen and it is always best to see the good in it because the Prophet in Sahih Muslim said “how wonderous is the affair of the one who believes in God because the affair of that one is all good, if God gives

him calamities he is patient and is rewarded for his patience and If He gives him blessings he is grateful and is reminded for his gratitude” so it is all good.

This is an amazing book, there is a lot in there. It is a good book, I mean these people have thought a lot about it. They are drawing from a tradition I mean a lot of the insights in this book are from our tradition. What they are doing is they are pulling it out and they are presenting it to us in a very palatable way.

Once you get into the old books this is what they talk about, they are just in another world you know and now you get these modern books you know “Islam made simple”. What a tragedy because it is deep, you just have to watch out for what they call the bends, you know the bends when you deep sea diving. You have to come up slow because you will get these bend things. That is when you have to go with the Islamic tradition when you go deep sea diving you have to resurface slowly, you need to go into the decompression chamber.

We arrived to the section on the qadr. The qadr is probably the most difficult concepts not just in Islam but in any religious tradition because the qadr is dealing with the idea of pre-determination and if you look at the word pre-determine. Determine is to put limits on something de-terminus. Terminate is to end. De is from ending our putting endings or limits on something do the idea of pre-determining means that something, the limits were already set before the thing actually came about and so there is a misconception in the minds of not just non Muslims but Muslims as well about the nature of the qadr, that the idea that things are pre-determined. One of the thoughts that the authors bring out which is very important is that if that was the case then the Quran would actually not make any sense because the Quran is commanding you to do things and if you have the ability to do anything and I command you to do something then my command is meaningless so it would then be saying the Quran is meaningless and that is impossible for a revelation to be meaningless. Everything in a revelation is meaningful so the idea that divine decree or the qadr is pre-determination is a dangerous one.

One the other hand you have to look at hadiths that indicate certain things about the world that are also important to understand and this is where you get into what some religious scholars in the West have called an antinomy which is not really a paradox but ...a paradox is when you have two things that are in a sense mutually exclusive but they are both apparently real and the idea of human beings are free and predetermined at the same time seems like a paradox. An

antinomy on the other hand is that something is true at one level but at a higher level, a higher truth emerges. And so there is an idea that there can be a resolution of what is apparently paradoxical by moving to a higher level of understanding.

So the idea that human beings...I think a good analogy of it in the modern world is the idea of light being both a wave and a photon because in modern physics they have this idea that the quanta are particles of light and there is an idea that on the one hand it behaves like a wave and they can watch its movement and on the other hand it appears to have the qualities of quanta or intermittent particles of light as opposed to being something that is unified. So that is I think is an interesting analogy for the understanding of free will and determination.

There is no doubt that human beings certain things are determined with human beings, Your parents were determined for you. You did not choose your parents and now we have no recorded history of anyone replacing their biological parents. In other words we do not have any testimony or proof that anybody has been able to become somebody else so that certainty was not determined.

The country that you were born in, the time in which you find yourself, all of these circumstances that we found ourselves in whether we were from rich families, whether we were from poor families also intellectual abilities and gifts, artistical qualities and gifts, there are many many qualities, athletic abilities.

There are people that are more lithe than other people, there are people that are more balanced, that are more flexible, that are quicker. When you were in school, there were those people that in the math classes that just would get the answers seemingly effortlessly and other people would grapple with it. There are people that word problems were as clear as instructions on a coke machine or something like that where they would just see very clearly what type of problem it was and how to arrive at an answer and then there are other people that would not see it for the life of them. They would struggle, and struggle and struggle and still it would not get through so all of those type of things that we find in the world, the discrepancies are very interesting and Islam has a very interesting reason in why it presents that.

The first thing just to look at this idea of qadr. If we look at the root word it comes from qaddara. It has the idea of power. Quddura – means power. The qadr is the one who is capable of doing something. They have the capacity to do something. It is one of the names of Allah.

There is a book by Crosby which is about Western dominance and how the Western world became dominance. His thesis is that they mastered the art of measuring everything and so one of the things about the ability to measure something is that if you can measure it you have a certain type of power over that thing. That is why if somebody is able to break down a machine, take it apart and understand all its constituents and components are they able to put it together, they have a power over it that somebody that does not know how to do that does not have.

And so the idea that Allah has determined everything is the idea that Allah has power over everything because He created it and determined it in that way so in human beings we are determined in our bodies in other words if you are 5’10” or 5”, there was a point at which your cells stopped growing, it was a point that your skeletal structure stopped, now that point that did not occur for someone who is taller than you it went up so there is a determination in the size of people as well. There is a determination in the size of the world that we are in. The universe itself has limits. The Quran says “if you were able to penetrate the limits of the universe then do it”. The universe itself has limits. The One who put limits on something has power over it because He was able to put those limits and that is why a King is powerful because he is able to constrain his populous, his kingdom. If he loses that capacity he loses his power therefore he is not a real King and that is the difference between a government that has power and a government that does not. The government that has power has the ability to suppress and squelch resistance inside that government so the idea of Allah being all powerful is that He has absolute power in His creation.

Now in the Quran one of the things that Allah says they did not measure God which is very interesting because it gives the idea that human beings are obsessed with measuring and that is what geometry came out of an attempt to measure and in fact we have Greeks and Egyptians over 2500 years ago that were already measuring the circumference of the earth and coming within 500 miles of doing that and they did that using some very simple geometrical calculations with shadows and measuring the pyramids at different times, looking at the distance between Alexandria and what is now Cairo and the basically a simple calculation. They basically measure the earth being close to 25,000 miles in its circumference so humans have been interested in measuring.

Now if you look in the enlightenment period they began to measure air, gas, they began to measure Boyles Law all these things came out of a desire to measure. The more they come to understand the measurements of things the more power they had over them so if you look at the jet flight. A jet flight, they have to understand what liquid fuel. This is the basis of engineering that you need to measure fully everything so humans have this obsession with wanting to measure and one of things with the signs of the end of time, the Quran says “that the humans would actually think they are completely powerful in relation to creation”. They have qadara over it. This is part of the idea that really knowing everything that is there so this idea that we can...I mean now they have sonar waves that they beam into the earth from space and when sonar waves come back they are like the sonogram that they do in a foetus. They can actually tell where oil is, where gold is and the HARP stuff what they are doing in Alaska is similar to that, measuring everything so Allah puts the interesting ayah in there, they have not measured God, that this is the one thing. They want to measure the universe I mean they can actually extrapolate out to try to understand how big the universe is. I mean this is one of their goals so the idea is yes you can measure everything. God has given you this qudra and that is part of a divine attribute that manifests in the human being, it is the human beings have this extraordinary ability to reflect these qualities of God and one of them is knowing the limits of everything but God has no limits and therefore God cannot be measured.

So the Quran uses the qadr in ten verses and from this merges a doctrine in Islam of the belief in the qadr although it is in the hadith. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said the six objects of faith in the hadith of Jibril, one of them is we believe in the divine decree or the measuring out its good and its bad or its good and its evil and we are going to talk about that. He and she go into that in a lot of detail and it is important.

There is khayr and sharh and it is sweet and bitter. Life is sweet and bitter and it is important I think the riwayat that mentions sweet and bitter because there is a way to look at khayr and sharh, the believer, a believer sees it as bitter that there are things in life that are bitter but they are not things for him and her that are evil and sharh, because the believer everything that happens to somebody who believes in God and believes that God is ultimately the One who is creating these circumstances that we find ourselves in and these tribulations then we begin to see it as a test as something we need to bear. That has to do with the idea of swallowing a bitter pill I mean we say that in colloquial English “I had to swallow a bitter pill” or “it has a bad taste”. Medicines are often bitter in Chinese, the heart herbs, the herbs that are good for the heart one of the qualities in Chinese medicine is that they are always bitter which is very interesting.

The next thing in this section that he brings out about is the idea of the servant, an abd. The word abd has many meanings. At one level it means a creative in other words it is something that is subservient to God by its very nature so if you make something it is automatically in a subordinate position by the fact that you have made it. It is subordinated to you and it cannot free itself from that condition so the idea of an abd is the verse in the Quran 19:93 everything in the heavens and earth comes to Allah Ar Rahman as an abd. It comes as a servant and so that is the general sense that everybody is an abd of Allah. Now there are conscious servants that are aware of their uboodiyah and there are servants that are not aware of this servanthood to Allah. This is the difference so the servant in its narrow sense is someone who consciously sees God by following a Prophet and in a still narrower sense it is a human being that serves God perfectly with full awareness and total freedom of choice.

So this is the idea of the servant in its most narrow sense is the abd in fact and is somebody who freely gives up his state to his Lord and this is the gift that Muslims believe that God gave His creation because in the Quran in Tawbah the verses “that God has purchased from the believers their wealth and their lives and against that purchase is paradise”. If God owns you in the first place then how did you engage yourself in a transaction? How do you sell what is not yours? This is the gift, it is the gift of somebody who if you come into a shop and he gives you something and then buys it back from you because he knows you are in need so it is the idea of the fadl, it is a bounty from Allah that He on the one hand already possesses you but on the other hand has engaged you in a commercial transaction in which you become a partner in other words you become a free agent and this is what the idea of taqrim, human beings have been honoured in that way because everything else in creation can only be what it is. If you look out at creation, there is nothing that can be other than what it is and this is something very interesting. A tree can only be a tree, it cannot be anything else, the dog can only be a dog, the pig, the horse, the donkey everything is determined in its attributes and its qualities except the human being. The human being can actually take on qualities that are strange to its nature. You have people that will actually bark like dogs. You have people that behave like animals or worse than animals and the Quran indicates that they are actually worse than animals because animals do not do things that harm them with knowledge.

An animal would never purposely harm itself, it will only do what it thinks is beneficial for itself so if an animal sees fire, it flees from fire whereas a human being will actually do things knowingly that harm itself and this is where the rational soul is overwhelmed by the irascible the concupiscent soul, those lower energies in the self.

One of the things that this idea in the Quran that God measures out carefully what He gives to His creatures and part of the reason for that is Allah did not do that they would overstep greatly, they would transgress. Now you can already see that there is transgression out there but if everybody got what they wanted then what would it be like? In other words the fact that not everybody gets what they want, there are only certain people that have enough power to sow corruption but if everybody had that power then what type of world would it be and so the point that there is a balance of power and this is the idea in the Quran that Allah says “had not Allah used some people to constrain other people” the entire world would be filled with corruption so there is a balance of power in the world. There is not one dictator that can simply do whatever he wants because if one emerges here, somebody else emerges over where to counterbalance them.

One of the major problems that have emerged in our lifetimes is the fact that America does not have any counterbalance, most of our lifetimes and certainly for the older people in the here during the 50’s, 60’s and 70’s and even the 80’s the Russians acted as a counterbalance to the Americans so the Americans could not do everything that they wanted because they only had to take into consideration what is going to be the reaction of Russia and vice versa and whereas now that has been removed that there becomes this vacuum and this is a very unusual scenario. It is not historical precedence, the Romans at one time were probably similar in a large portion of the world but the Romans did not control Africa or at least not most of it. They controlled North Africa, they certainly did not control Asia nor did they control India.

When Alexander the Great who was in Macedonia when he went to India, he wanted to conquer India, he got sick, all his troops got sick, they had to leave. That is another thing Horatious mentions that nobody has ever moved towards the Arabian peninsula except they were stopped so there have been people...there have been people...in fact Alexander the Great died of a fever in Egypt, he was on his way to invade Arabia.

Arabia was never intended in the ancient period, armies were always stopped from invading it. Abraha was the Ethiopian who lived in Yemen, when he set his sights on the Mecca, his army was destroyed so there has always been these constraints in the world and the thing about it is many of them you are not even aware of. There are times when a country wants to do something and then something really tragic happens that prevents them from doing it because they become pre-occupied, their economy collapses or they have major natural disasters, their economy collapses or they have major natural disasters, they have this or they have that. So there are

things in the world that you are not even aware of that you cannot comprehend because we as human beings we are limited in our perspectives.

When we look at the world, what has to be understood is that there is a balance in the world that is not always discernable, not that it is not there because of short-sightedness and one of the things that Imam Raghav says is that all things are “everything is equal and they are not different in that everything was created with a wisdom” so at the essence of every thing, the rock is equal to the human that the rock was created for a purpose just as the human was created for a purpose so that at the level when you look at the world everything that is in the world is in the world for a reason and this is what he meant when Allah says you will not see disparity in the creation of the Merciful in other words we look at the creation you will not see that one thing is different from another and then Allah says keep looking if you think there is keep looking and your eye will come back to you exhausted and fatigued in trying to find something that has no purpose in creation, everything has purpose, the least atom has purpose.

Then it says that humans are different in that everything that is existent is specific to a benefit and if you look nothing has more difference in all of this but human beings and Allah says they were created in stages. We raised some humans over others in other words that this is according to the Quran from God that there are these differences in the creation.

Look at how we have preferred some over others in the world, you are told in the Quran to look in the world and see how some have been preferred over others in the world and then immediately after that and in the next world are even greater differences and more preference. So do not become deluded by things in other words these are infinite, limited. A person might have wealth, fame, have beauty, have lineage, have all these things for 50, 60 70 years and then it is over but the next world is infinite and therefore you cannot compare the two in that way. Had God wanted He could made you one ummah, one people all the same but He desired to try you in what He has given you. In other words, the differences “had your Lord wanted, He could have made you one people and He is the One who made you replace others in the earth” just as we are here know there were people before us. There were people in Hereward and those people mostly were Hispanic people who worked in the fields here, before them there were Indians here, they were native Californians. They were here, they were living here. They had a whole cosmology, they had religious festivals on Mount Diablo and they have gone now and now we here and replacing them and then it says “We raised some of you over others in order to test you to try you in what He has given you” and then also “Had God wanted He would have made you one people

and look you continue to be different” which means you are different but also you differ except those who specific mercy has been given them.

After that it says “for that reason He created them” in other words to differ and to be sharh mercy so that is part of the intention of the creation. That in the earth, you see all of these different types of earth out there that are different. Earth are different, soil is different. There is rich soil, there is poor soil, there is soil that if you plant nothing grows, there is salt marshes, nothing will grow there or only certain specific vegetation. There are areas where fruit trees flourish, there are other areas where they cannot grow because of air.

One of the meanings of Tur (Surah Zaytoun) is a mountain that trees grow on because there are mountains that no trees grown on. It gets too high and it cannot sustain vegetable life. So even in creation there is all this diversity and that is going to have an effect on people living there and then he says these are signs and we go back to the idea a few weeks ago talking about signs that human beings are here to perceive signs. These are signs for people who have intellect that can actually reflect that can actually think and then he says wisdom necessitates all of this because the human being cannot sustain himself alone and therefore had a human being been forced to sustain everything that he needed alone, most human beings would not survive for very long and so because human beings need other human beings there needs to be this tafawit. Had everybody been given wealth then how would some people serve other people? If all of us had equal wealth how would some people serve other people?

There is another important point here which is had God not created with free will these human beings to feel impoverished then who would need God? If everybody felt independent they would feel no need and this is what the Quran says, human beings become aggressive and oppressive and they transgress when they deem themselves independent of God and so the state of impoverishment which the human being whether his is wealthy materially or impoverished materially is the same. Every human being is in reality impoverished before God, is in need of God for that sustenance and this is why animals have been subjugated to human beings. They are subordinated, human beings benefit from animals. We eat, we have leather products, we have all these things.

Everything if you look around here, a lot of the stuff that is coming from animals and we do not even think about it, all these carpets you are on they are Afghani wool carpets. They are coming

from animals. We benefited from those animals. If there was a human being they are not going to let you shave their hair so you can make a carpet with it or something like that but what can the animal do? It is subjugated to you.

Now the same is true for most people you cannot ask your neighbour to take out your garbage for you right, really you cannot do that. So who is going to take the garbage because somebody has to do that. That is a function because human beings create garbage and it would be very difficult for people to have to get rid of their own garbage.

There are people that Allah has subjugated to other people. Now the beauty of the Arabic language is the word in the Quran that is used for this suqriah and siqriyah, uses the same word. The word for using and the word for exploiting, the difference between them is a vowel, it is literally a kasrah and a dhammah.

So what happens is you can start having contempt for other people because you are in this position where you can subordinate others to you and this is the danger. Human beings always become contemptuous of other people and that is a disease and that is why the Quran warns about that, that it is God who did this. It is not you and what then is supposed to happen is if you are a servant of God you begin to see it as a bounty that God has given you not for any specific reason but that He gives to whom He pleases.

Just as He gave you He can take it away and He can give that person what He has given you and then in the Quran Allah says that their affairs between them were all different and every group was happy with what they were doing. Now one of the things about the modern world which is different because it is important to note this in fact America is the unique place where the idea of place in society was removed. In other words you had this, in the traditional Muslim world people had places in society and the only thing that could get you out of that was knowledge. Even wealth was very difficult to break into, it is still like that in most Muslim countries, it is still like that in this country. It is very difficult if you do not have capital to make any money then it is very difficult. Very clever people can do it and there are ways to do that and those people are usually people that you know people are interested in them because how did they do it? So a person who has nothing and ends up becoming wealthy, it is usually again some type of knowledge, it is some type of creativity they find something nobody else has done before, they find some niche or something like that and then there is crafty people that learn how to do things

dishonestly and they can also do that organise crime or disorganise crime or however it happens. ENRON was organised crime, it was organised at a very high level.

So this is a very nice poem by an American poet. It is called the fear of God:

If you should rise from nowhere up to somewhere

From being no one up to someone

Be sure to keep to repeating to yourself

You owe it to an arbitrary God

He means by arbitrary and arbitrary it is somebody that does things according to their own discretion, nothing is imposed upon them by the outside to do it that is what the Quran emphasizes that “He gives to whom He pleases”. That is an arbitrary decision from God. An arbiter in English is somebody who has the authority to dictate a judgment.

You owe it to an arbitrary God whose mercy to you rather

than to others won't bear too critical examination

If you really start looking at yourself you start seeing that you do not really deserve this more than this person so you begin to analyse that, you see that.

Stay unassuming if for lack of licence to near the uniform of

who you are you should be tempted to make up for it

*in an in subordinating look or tone, beware of coming too much to the surface and using for
apparel what was mean to be the curtain of the inmost soul*

In other words if you start realizing and this is the sense of inferiority that you do not really deserve to be.....you do not have a right to what you have. That can make you feel inferior and so you make up for that by looking at people with a subordinating look, in other words you place them in a class lower than yourselves so if for lack of license to wear the uniform of who you are you should be tempted to make up for in an insubordinating look or tone, because that reality is an inward reality, that is what he is saying it is not outward because if you have been given all these gifts and you are just an arrogant monster with the gifts, they have not benefited you so anything that you have been given you have to see it as a bounty of God. That is a beautiful expression of what this is about of recognising that these differences that we see in the creation are differences that God has placed and if He has placed you in a position over others, it is not because of some inherent betterness, it is because that is the nature of the world that you are in and then it becomes a responsibility. That is why the highest quality of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) is his servitude to Allah and His creation because He was a servant before anything. If you look at his entire life was in service to others even before He was given the revelation, he was a trustworthy merchant in the service of another and in the service of a woman which for many Arabs would have been seen as humiliating whereas the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) did not have that same view of the world that a lot of people have, he did not see things the way other people saw it that if something is honourable, it is honourable and it does not matter what it might appear to others.

One of the things that is brought out which is really important is that it may happen that you will hate a thing that is good for you and it may happen that you love a thing and it is evil for you and God knows and you do not know. God knows and you do not know. If you are given something someone else was given it might destroy you so you want something people want to win the lottery, there are all these people that have won the lottery and it has ruined their lives completely destroyed their lives, they ended up losing all their friends, they got divorced and this is the reality of the world. You do not know what is good for you and what is not good for you and that is why you do not ask for specific things in Islam, the sunnah is not to ask for specific things because you do not know if it is good for you or not and Talibah is the great example of that, the man who came to the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and said “make prayer that God gives me wealth” and he said no. He kept coming back to him “Ya Rasulullah please make dua that I get some wealth and I promise I will use it for good and this and that”. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) would not do it, it is called ilhah, the man did not get the message and the Prophet(sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) out of his generosity, will not turn away somebody who questions him or asks for something. So he made a dua and this man who always used to be in the front of the prayer line he suddenly started getting all this wealth, animal, livestock and he would get further and further away from the mosque as he would have to go out and graze his animals, he would end up not praying in the community and when the time came

for zakah and he said “this is like jizyah”. So it actually had a terrible effect on him and that is what the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) knew but he became a lesson for others. I mean that is even why I am mentioning him today as a lesson, he became a lesson for the rest of the believers so you do not know what is good for you.

Now one of the things is that good comes to us through the qadr, one of the things that is measured out is the degree of freedom that Allah created everything and guided it to its purpose and because the human being was created by Allah, the human being has a purpose and he and she was guided to that purpose which is servitude and servitude means that one knows that one is in a subordinate position with one's Creator and not with anybody else and therefore what happens is you begin to look at things differently. This does not mean that you do not recognise hierarchy in the creation but you do not have this value statement on the hierarchy that the people of the outward have. In other words, if you look at creation you do not know if the street sweeper is closer to God than the physician. The physician might be more beneficial in worldly terms, the street sweeper might be more beneficial in worldly terms, the street sweeper might be closer to God in piety and in awareness of God and have answered prayers and actually be more beneficial without even knowing.

The inward eye is different than the outward eye. When you look with the inward eye, it has a different vision than the outward eye has but the inward eye is in most people, it is veiled. It is like when children are born they cannot see, they can only see very very closely, they cannot see anything and some of them have this gunk in their eyes that prevents them from seeing so part of growing up is being able to open your eyes and also sleepers do not see because their eyes are close when they sleep.

We have different awakenings. There are three basic human awakenings. You have the bestial awakening which is the awakening of the senses and this obviously begins with touch, this is why children put things in their mouths. They want to experience everything in their senses and that culminates in intimacy between husband and wife, I mean that is the height of that culmination of the sensual awakening.

You also have the emotional awakening and this is the feelings that one has of love and hate and these type things so that is a type of awakening that you begin to awaken to feelings that you

have and why you have them and why he makes you angry or she makes you angry or why you love this person and why love that person.

Then there is an intellectual awakening that people have and many people unfortunately do not have that in school and things like that. The school actually do the opposite because the teachers are often incompetent and do not respect the awareness and understanding of the students that they have, that they sometimes end up making people actually hate learning which is a real crime. I once met a guy in Marilyn who was a bricklayer. He said he had never really thought about anything. He was interested in sports. A brick fell on his head, they were building a house, it fell on his head and he ended up, he was in the hospital for a long time and somebody gave him a book “how to read a book” and he had never read books before and what he told me was it is in the first or second chapter, the chapter begins with you have a mind, he said it was the first time he even considered that and what happened from this point because no one ever told him that, he was always told that he was stupid and he had been told that in school, he was a stupid person and he ended up becoming a bricklayer, it does not mean that bricklayers are stupid but it was a job of labour but he had this intellectual awakening. He began to read and got interested in literature, he got interested in history and actually his wife because his wife married someone who did not have that and so they actually began to grow apart because she was not growing with him, she was not having the same awakening.

Now the final awakening, the fourth awakening, the great awakening is the spiritual awakening and many many people never wake up to this or it is too late like Firoun. It happened as he was being drowned, his spiritual awakening. So the idea of realizing at a certain point that just as you realised you are a sensual being though the bestial awakening you realise you are an emotional being and at a certain point you can realise that you are an intellectual being, that you have an intellect.

Every human being has an intellect. People that are called average in this culture or even below average have immense intellectual capacity but it has not been tapped, it has not seen exploited. So human beings have immense...people say “I have a terrible memory” you have an immense memory. If you start thinking about all the things that you remember, where your bank is, what it is called, what type of dishwashing soap you buy, I mean you have a massive amount of data stored there. It is phenomenal. That is part of the problem, you are memorizing the wrong things so the spiritual awakening is something that will often occur with some trauma, it is very common for people, people have a heart attack, people will have a sickness, people will lose a

parent, people will lose a child and suddenly these questions come into focus, they had not been in there before and that is the greatest awakening because ultimately we are spiritual beings you know the bestial that goes, the emotional one goes, the intellectual one according to the Muslims everything that you learn you lose when you die except what you learned that was beneficial for your next life ultimately even the intellectual, the true intellectual awakening is a spiritual awakening as well.

So the baseera is that inward sight. It is the ability to perceive something with the inward eye and one of the things about the world is that when you look at the world and this is where the good and evil are very interesting, when you look at the world most people look at the world in terms of good and evil by what they think is good and evil in other words when I look out at the world this is good, why? Because I like it and that is evil, why? Because I do not like it and so things that I do not like happening are evil and things that I like happening are good. This is the criteria of the human being.

Now one of the things about the Arabs is they say in a proverb “the calamities of one people are the benefits of another people” so one people’s good is another people’s evil. So for instance if you look at this country the fact that you can go to the store and buy really cheap clothes, that might be something that is good that you like about this country but if you really understand the reasons why those clothes are cheap it is because of suffering that is going on in South America or in Indonesia where people have to work in sweatshops that make those cheap shirts that end up in mass produced malls in America where these people go in and they buy the thing because somebody was working for \$1.50 an hour and in some places they have to use these children because their hands are small, they do not want big people because they are cheaper. So what is good and what is evil and that is a really difficult question.

Now if you look at the Islamic definition, khayr and sharh do not really correlate to good and evil, they are really not good translations for khayr and sharh because of this idea “maybe you hate a thing and think it is evil and it is good” and therefore to determine it with any type of moral certainty is very very difficult thing to do. Now obviously the shariah or the sacred law of Islam gives the criteria for determining. Killing is bad. Is it always bad? No. It is not always bad. Sometimes it is a benefit. If somebody is about to kill you unjustly, you have a right to defend yourself and if you kill them you did something that was sanctioned by sacred law. On the other hand the other person who was doing it was evil and if the other got his way it was khayr. Do you see that? Same act but two different. Now the person who was killed maybe that causes a

complete spiritual transformation in several people who knew that person or maybe some law comes into being because of that person's death that changes and has an effect on the whole society so then what was evil as a singular act actually produces much good again, this is something, the whole point of the Quran is you do not know and then there is a really interesting...I think this is so fascinating the way that this was articulated which is from the and apology if people who know this story which is from Socrates, he was condemned to death for blasphemy because they said that he did not believe in the official gods of the state and also for corrupting the youth and he says in there the real reason he was condemned was that he said that "I spent all my time going about trying to persuade, young and old, to make first your chief concern not for your bodies nor for your possessions but for the highest welfare of your soul's proclaiming as I go. Wealth does not bring goodness but goodness does bring wealth and every other blessing both to the individual and to the state now if I corrupt the young by this message, the message would seem to be harmful but if anyone says my message is different from this he is talking nonsense". So his corrupting of youth was that he was making them lose their materialism and parents always get upset when their children became less materialistic because they start worrying about who is going to take care of me when I get old if he does not make any money? So they have this idea of no you have to do this, go out and make a lot of money so anybody that will change that gameplan becomes a corrupter of youth so that is the real reason.

The other reason he said is "because somebody went to the oracle and asked who was the wisest person in Greece?" They said "Socrates" and he said "that cannot be right". So he went around to disprove it, he went to all these wise people he ended up finding out that they were all really ignorant and so that is why they condemned him to death. He said "you guys just don't like me because I go around talking in public examining your so-called wise people and exposing their ignorance in front of everybody so it has made them mad so they want me dead". I just want to set that for people who have not read this just to know, what interest me here is that he said that he had what was called a demon and it was a voice that he heard that would tell him, he said he never wanted to do anything bad but that voice would stop him even if he wanted to do something wrong. What he said is that people think death is bad, he just says to them it is not a lack of arguments that has caused my condemnation but a lack of infamy and impudence and the fact that I refuse to address you in a way that would give you most pleasure. You would all like to hear me weep and wail and doing and saying all sorts of things which I regard as unworthy of myself that you are used to hearing from other people but I did not think then that I ought to stoop to servility because I was in danger and I do not regret now the way in which I pleased my case. I would much rather die as a result of this defence than lie as a result of another resort. In a court of law just as in warfare neither I or any other sought to use his wits to escape death by any means in battle it is often obvious that you could escape being killed by giving up your arms and training yourself on the mercy of your pursuers and in every kind of danger there

are plenty of devices for avoiding death. If you are unscrupulous enough to stick at nothing but I suggest gentleman that the difficulty is not as much to escape from doing wrong which is far more fleet of foot. That is what really takes doing.

And so he says I will tell you in killing a good man I want to tell you my executioners that as soon as I am dead then vengeance shall upon with a punishment far more painful than your killing of me. You have brought about my death in belief that though it you may be delivered from submitting your conduct to criticism but I say that the result will be just the opposite. Not only will you be condemned historically by people that come after you are going to get punished in this world and all these men they were all just killed when the Spartans came in, they just massacred the whole lot of them. It is very interesting. He said "I feel moved to prophecy" that is what he said.

I mean if he was an Indo-European Prophet, I do not know, Allahu Alim but he is a very interesting character in any case. But he says "if you expect to stop denunciation of your wrong way of life by putting people too death there is something amiss with your reasoning. This way of escape is neither possible nor credible, the best and easiest way is not to stop the mouths of others but to make yourself as good men as you can in other words do not wipe out your critics, listen to their criticisms and take them seriously and rectify yourself so that they don't...but again this is an interesting dialogue here but what he says is I will tell you, he is now telling him because they have now condemned him to death, they said you choose what you think would be an appropriate punishment, he said "well since I am doing social welfare here by showing you all your ignorant and telling you not to engage in materialism. I think you should provide me with free meals for the rest of my life. That is his punishment so he said now you are going to hell.

They condemned him to death but he said "I will tell you I suspect that this thing that has happened to me is a blessing and we are quite mistaken in supposing death to be an evil see because that is all people want to do, they want to live and what he is saying is "look you think it is an evil that is just your perspective I have good grounds for thinking this because my accustomed sign could not have failed to oppose me if what I have been doing had not been sure to bring some good result" because it never failed him in his life. This damon, what he called a damon, it was a voice that he used to hear. We should reflect that there is much reason to hope for a good result on other grounds as well. Death is one of two things either annihilation and dead have no consciousness of anything or as we are told it is really a change a migration of the soul from this place to another. So if it is nothing then he said it us like a sleep and if it is

something then he says if on arrival in the other world beyond the reach of our so called justice, this phoney justice of this world, one will find the true judge who presides in that court in other words you are going to get real justice in the next world and if you are a good man why do you have anything to fear? And I am willing to die ten times over if this account of true. In fact I am particularly interested in experiencing those on the other side like Palamites and Ajax son of Telemon. I would actually like to compare my fortunes with theirs because they all got unfair trials as well.

Then he ends it by saying I bear no grudge for my own part against those who condemned me and accused me although it was not this kind of intention that they did so but because they thought they were hurting me so I forgive you all because I don't think you are hurting me, I think you are doing me a favour. You are making me a martyr. So here is what he says "Now it is the time that we are going I to die and you to live but which of us has the happier prospect is unknown to anyone but God so you see you think you are getting rid of me, an evil, and you are doing your society a good but as far as I am concerned what you are doing is the evil and you will be recompensed for it. As for me all I have done is good in my life, I have been warning you, I have been trying to tell you not to have lives of profligacy and that I why I am not afraid of death". So that is another example of this perspective and he called it compounded ignorance to see that death is an evil because he said you do not even know what is on the other side. So your assumption that it is evil, it is just your own ignorance.

If like me because in another dialogue in Gorgious he says that he believes there is a hell and paradise and that everybody is judged by a just judge, he says they are stripped naked and they are going before this court, they will not be able to fool anybody with fancy clothes or articulate arguments and he tells this one guy "maybe you can box my ears off in this world but in the next world you are going to get your ears boxed off". He says "you probably think it is a myth but I do not think it is. I believe it to be true" and he said "the good will go to the Isle of the blessed" that is what he called it, the Isle of the blessed. That is the idea of you do not know what you think is good and what you think is evil.

Now another really interesting thing that if you look at good and evil in the Quran is about loss and gain and that is the point he is making. You think you are gaining something by getting rid of me, I say you are losing something. You think I am losing something by depriving me of life I say I am gaining something better because I believe in life after death.

Chapter 8

He is putting it in terms of loss and gain and that is the real understanding of good and evil. It is about loss and gain so who gains and who loses. That is what you have to look at when you see the world, who gains and loses? Because you can see this man who gains all this wealth through his corrupt transactions but has he really gained. Even in the New Testament “what has a man gained if he has obtained the whole world and lost his soul?” What have you really gained? That is a different way of seeing the world, of seeing good and evil and that is why when you look out you do not know what is going on. You do not have an idea, I mean once I was with Shaykh Abdullah and we were in Mauritania and in West Africa, in maintaining the people with the least in that country are the blacks and I asked him once about just that situation because it always bothered me, it is something that really bothered me when I was there and he said to me one time he said you know if you look in the terms of this side of the world you only see the one thing but he said that if you look in terms of the other side the people that have the greatest difficulty in this world and have the patience in dealing with that have the least hisab in the next world. He said maybe these people are just the people of paradise. So it is a different way, it does not justify the condition, you still have to oppose the condition but it gives you a different perspective on it you know in other words the way that was used in the past, is to opiate people and to justify injustice and Islam never does that. It says you still have to oppose the wrong but do not assume that it is all evil, do you see? That is the point because you do not have the full picture, you only have a portion of it and that is at the essence of what this is about of recognising good and evil as loss and gain.

That is why Allah says (in the first line of Surah Asr), Allah could have said “La fee sharh” by time the human being the nature is that he is in loss, he is losing, except those who believe and do good deeds and they enjoin what is right and they enjoin people to be patient” because it is difficult, there are many things that are wrong in the world so you enjoin right but you have also to enjoin people to be patient and bear the difficulties of the world because if all you have out there is the demand for right and not recognising that one, not all the wrongs will be righted in this world and that is where we believe in the next world that the wrongs of this world, there is a grave that I saw one of the Muslim slaves that was here in America, I think it is in Mississippi but it shows a hand like this, his name was Yusuf and on the gravestone it was not a cross, it was a hand with the fingers pointed up and it said on the tombstone “there is justice in the next world”. It is going to happen, if it did not happen in this world, it will happen in the next world and so that is a different way of again of seeing the world is that if you do not believe in that world then you will go insane by looking out there because there is just so much wrong out there.

You will go insane and it does not mean to accept it. That is what is important, it is not that you accept it in other words that you should do what you can to redress the wrongs of the world but it does not destroy you that they are there because you know they are there for a wisdom.

That is the point is that there is a hikmah behind that, that there is nothing that happens in the world that does not have wisdom.

Now one of the things that the Quran points out is that God did not have the attributes of a wise parent and there are hadiths that indicate that Allah has that care of a mother, the love of Allah for His servants is greater than the mothers love but He said He would give the foolish children of this world what they want and this is one of the things about this world. Most people are so spiritually immature because you can have an adult emotionally, you can have an adult intellectually, you can have an adult sensually. Somebody can go out and fornicate and do all these things, it is an adult sensually, a child cannot do that, an adult can. Somebody can go and work in the world with their mind and acquire wealth and do all these things but as an adult, a child cannot do that.

But a spiritual adult, that is a different category, because most people are spiritual children. They are in the state of the infant in terms of their spirituality and because of that if they were given what they wanted, it would be like giving a child poison. It would like giving a child a gun to play with that is loaded. This is why the Quran says “what is it they who divide up the mercy of your Lord? We have divided among them their livelihood in the life of this world and raised some of them above others in rank.”. So some take others in forced labour and that forced labour here is the idea of using them not oppressing them but the mercy of your Lord is better than what they collect in other words do not get deluded by this dunya and all these categories in dunya, to strive for the akhirah is better, the mercy of your Lord is a higher thing, were it not that people would be a single community through ingratitude and truth concealing in other words through kufr we would have appointed for those who have kufr towards the Merciful roofs of silver to their houses, stairs where up to mount and doors to their houses and couches whereinto recline and ornaments surely all this is but the enjoyment of the life of this world and surely the next world with your Lord belongs to the people of taqwa in other words it is saying all the kuffar had all this wealth and luxury, the believers would want to be like the kuffar and that is one of the signs of the end of time is that people want to be like the non Muslims. That is from hadith is that people imitate non Muslims.

When the Muslims had all their wealth, it was the non Muslims that did not have anything so the Muslims looked at Europe, the Europeans had nothing to offer the Muslims so they never got deluded whereas now the tables have turned and all you have is the Quran which should be enough because if you read those verses you would have the guidance to see that it is not the real thing that there is something different and that is why in the end of time what did the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said to Imam Ali when he said “how do we get out of all this confusion?”. He said “KitabAllah”. You have to go back to the book of Allah and understand its core messages, understand the centrality of this book so one of the things that they talk about is this idea of good.

The dua of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) “all good comes from you and evil does not return to you”. The reason for that is the essence of Allah is purity and there is no room for evil. There is no room because evil is absence, it is like darkness. Darkness is the absence of light. Evil is the absence of good and therefore that element does not exist but Allah created evil, sharh, it is a creation of Allah so it is not God but it is a creation of God and this is the odyssey in Christianity, the biggest problem that they have is the problem of evil because they do not know where it comes from. The problem goes if God is Omniscient, All-Knowing and all good then He would know where the evil is and He has the power to remove it and because He is all good He would not want it in the world and that is called the problem of evil. Philosophers always love that one to challenge Christians with and what Christians tend to fall into is this Manichaeism that free will, the devil but if it is free will then it is against the will of God in other words the fact that it is in the world, where did it come from? Because the world is a creation of Allah and everything in it is a creation of Allah so the fact that he created creatures that He knew would do evil means that He created evil and this is something that Christians, they do not want to admit that whereas Muslims we are told that right from the start and the point again that the Quran and the Hadith emphasise is it is relative to you. You do not really understand it and therefore do not assume what you think is evil is evil or what you think is good is good because you just do not know. You do not have all the variables and you do not have the complete picture so the mirror image is identical to the real in as much as it reflects the real's attribute but it is other than real in as much as it is supported by non existence so this is not talking about the world itself that the world what is good in it is what reflects the divine and what is evil in it is absent of divine attribute or qualities.

So when you look at the world, if you look at the world as a mirror that does not exist. If you can allow your mind to imagine a mirror that does not exist and if you could imagine looking into that mirror and seeing your image and then the mirror has other than your image because you

need the mirror to reflect the image so the image is not reflected completely in the mirror, part of the mirror is there so you see your image in the mirror. Now good is what is reflected, if you look at the universe as a reflection of God, it is not God but it is a reflection of God's attributes that the evil in it is what is demarcating the good in other words you could not see the image without the evil. You could not see the good of God without knowing the sharh because if you had no evil in the world, you would not know good. You would not know what it is because like the Arabs says "by opposites things are distinguished".

And so Allah created a world and then reflected his attributes. Now the human being is called insaan which means the pupil of the eye and one the meanings that some of the scholars indicated in a sense the human being is like the reflected vision of God in other words the human being has been created to witness God in the world because God is reflecting on Himself in the world in other words the world is also because it is a desired act of God, God brought the world into existence and there is a purpose for the world which is that God is known "I only created the world that I might be known". Who can know God in the world, it is not the bird, it is not the frog, it is not the donkey, it is not the rock. They cannot know God with cognizance, they only know God as a state in which they are in of absolute worship but they cannot cognitively know God. That is the human being and that is why he and she has this extraordinary position in creation which is where we get to the next section which is the trial, the idea of a trial, that human beings have been brought into the world and they are tried so God measures out good and mercy to test people's faith and to allow people to prove their own nature not to God in other words when God says He created us to try you to see which of you is best in action, He does not need to see which of you is best in action because He knows that. It is to show you your true nature and that is the word for trial in Arabic is to test metal and the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "human beings are minerals, you have gold, you have silver, you have copper, you have lead and then you have toxic metals" and what tribulation does is that it shows people their nature and that is why when some of the worst calamities happen to people what they say when they get through it is "I didn't know I had it in me to get through that". In other words, they saw something about themselves they did not see when they survived the immense hardship and another thing about tribulation is all of us who have lived, I don't think there is anybody in this room that had had a tribulation that when all of the bitterness and all of the difficulty was gone they were not able to look back and say they learned a great deal from the experience.

In other words it is the process of human and spiritual evolution it is through calamities and that is what Shaykh Muhammad was talking about last night when he said "calamities are the holidays of the people seeking God" because when a calamity comes who do you run to? God,

that is part of the beauty of tribulation is that my sister just visited Morocco and she said all of these people that were not wearing the hijab before are wearing the hijab and she asked somebody who was a friend. She said all the stuff that is happening in the world is making a lot of people think and so then you begin to see is it evil or is it good? What is happening? Are these things happening because it is bad or is it happening because we have forgotten who we are, we have forgotten what we are here for and it is unfortunate we need these massive calamities to wake us up.

So then you begin to perceive the world in a different way so trials is something that we see as part of the reason why we have been created. “We have appointed all that is on earth as an adornment for you that We may try them which of them is the most beautiful in works, blessed is He who created death and life that He may try you which if you is the most beautiful in works”. When harm touches or afflicts the human being he calls upon God then we can confer on him blessings he says I was given it because of a knowledge that I have so this is a type of ingrate not it is a trial but most of them know not”. When Bani Israil, the Israelites were afflicted by the Pharonic people in Egypt, Allah says “men were being killed and women were being left to be servants” and then Allah said “and in that is a grave tribulation not from the Pharonic people, from your Lord” that is what the Quran says to Bani Israil. This is from your Lord, that tribulation and then what does it follow with “and now your Lord has announced if you show gratitude we will increase not with tribulation but in blessings” because the verse begins with “remind them of the great days of God when He relieved you of your tribulations so knowing that real calamity when it gets to intense levels that is when the relief comes and that is why the Arabs they say “the darkest portion of the night announces the dawn” and there is a poem by Imam Nahawi where he said:

“O calamity get worse because I know you will get better”

It is a beautiful poem that he wrote, it is all about asking for the thing to get worse so it can get better and that is what happened when the man in Sahih ul Bukhari, he had stomach problems, the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) told him to take honey and his brother gave it to him, he came back and said it got worse. He said tell him to take more, he took more, it got worse, tell him to take more, it got worse. Finally he got better and the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “your bothers stomach has lied and God spoke the truth because God said honey was a cure”. It is particularly good for cleaning out the stomach but the reason that he got more diarrhea was because according to Imam Qayyumul Jawziyyah in his book on Prophetic

Medicine, he said the disease originated because of things that needed to be cleared out and so when he was given the medicine it purged him even more so the actual crisis was a healing crisis. That is what they call it in homoeopathy if they give you the right remedy you often get worse before you get better and they call it in homoeopathic medicine a healing crisis.

That is why the most intense period for a woman in childbirth is just before she gives birth and that is when it gets the worst, this amazing thing is about to happen.

So that is part of what is going on in the world and also “do people reckon they will be left alone to say we have faith and will not be tested” and then this idea of when evil afflicts him he is in despair, that is the people who do not know the way the world works.

Now one of the things about moderns is that they have this idea that they are free and what is really interesting about moderns is that because they do not have particularly in a lot of Western countries is that they have lost the idea of spiritual liberation and so they become slaves to the lowest aspect of themselves. They become slaves to drugs, they become slaves to sensual pleasures, they become slaves to food, they become slaves to image, they become slaves to all these different things out there and they do not have this inward freedom which is really what the Quran is talking about because the tahqiq ul uboodiyah which is the realisation of one’s state with God is to realise four qualities:

1. It is the realisation of impoverishment once you realise that God is absolutely independent, you realise that you are absolutely dependent so that is the realisation of impoverishment.
2. The realisation of complete ajiz which is incapacity. Once you realise that God is absolutely capable of doing all things you realise that you are incapable.
3. Then also ignorance. One you realise God is Al-Alim you realise that you are the jahil.
4. Then also the realisation of the state of humility or humiliation, dhul, which is you are humbled and then that God is Al Aziz. In realisation of that, and this is the beauty of it is that you become ghanybillah, you become enriched by God, you become knowledgeable by God, you become

dignified by God and you become powerful by God so in realizing your servanthood you are actually drawing near to these attributes that God has manifest in this world which are divine attributes because here the purpose of Islam is to show the way to tawheed, to be human is to be relatively free but to be free as it is humanly possible to be free can only come about when full submission and surrender to reality is achieved.

You can be relatively free, I mean in America people are relatively free, they can get up, get in their car, drive to where they want, they can go and eat whatever they want, buy what they want, this type thing and there is relative freedom but real freedom is realising your state of submission to God because that frees you from putting faith in other than good because any faith in other than God is always going to let you down. It is part of the nature of the world and once you see that, when people let you down, you realise they are doing you a favour and you do not have anger towards them because they are being human. It is the whole point because the only one that will not let you down is Allah. Everybody else lets you down.

Then it is interesting that this idea on page 118 they say that all things have something in terms of tashbiyah in other words in everything in creation and it is not adab to mention things like pigs, there is no point in doing that, you speak in universals not in particulars, ignorant people will bring that up, when you say everything has some tashbiyah or something that expresses something about the nature of God in the world, when you look, the first they look is the mineral world, that a rock and so one of the things about the rock is that the tanzih is much more manifest, the otherness of God in other words you cannot see really much in a rock that would remind you of God but one of the things that does remind you of the nature of a rock is its permanence. It is not vegetative, it has a type of permanence. It is not vegetative, it has a type of permanence in the world that is very different from other things. It is solid and it is powerful also the facts that planets which are essentially almost big rocks, God moves them around in a certain way and can smash them up against each other. It is an indication of his qudara. If you go the vegetable life then it is has obviously one of the most important attributes of the divine which is life al hayah and there are seven attributes and they can them here the seven leaders. These are:

1. Hayah - Life
2. Knowledge – Ilm
3. Samaa – Hearing
4. Basr – Sight

5. Irada - Will
6. Qudura – Power
7. Qalam – Speech

When you look at a vegetable, a vegetable has life but it does not have will it doesn't have you see, it does not have any other than life so in that way it reflects something of the divine.

When you look at the human being you come to something very different because suddenly you see a human being has all seven of those attributes “In your own souls, do you not see?”. In other words do you not see what God has given you. He has given you as His greatest sign. In your own souls is the greatest sign of God and this is the meaning of this idea of man being in the image. It is not in any anthropomorphic sense, the human being reflects these seven key attributes of God which is life, knowledge, hearing, sight, will, qudura, capacity and speech. I am muntaqalim, I am qadir, I am alim, I am all these things and these are attributes of God. He put them in me in order to reflect his nature so that we would know who God is and that is the meaning of “if you know yourself, you know your Lord” because this is the closest thing to you.

That is why self knowledge is at the essence of Islam of knowing who you are but you have to have it in the proper perspective because you are also jahil, you are also dead, you are also powerless, you are also deaf, dumb, speechless without volition. You see so this is the human being, the human condition is this really interesting...and then in looking at why we have been given this because we were meant to stand as khalifah in this earth. “I am placing a caliph in the earth”.

Now on page 120-121 I personally do not like the way they did this, it is kind of done in a humorous American, I did not feel it was appropriate, there are a few things in the book, there is another section towards the end that bothers me but I mean generally the book is so good that I am going to overlook that section. It is not that bad but things like “God has something up His sleeve” and “God rubbed it in a bit”. It is not the way traditional scholars in any way would describe that so I will look at like “every steed stumbles and every razor sharp sword has a blunt point and every scholar has slips”. So anybody that writes and does anything is ultimately going to do that but that is just something, I certainly have done myself on many occasions so I am not going to take them to account but I just thought that I would bring that to your attention.

Just about the question now they kind of indicate that the angels hear, they seemed a bit upset I mean when they ask the question it is called istifhaan, it is not because there are two types of questions. A type of question where somebody rejects something and then a question where somebody is trying to get information. It is considered a question where they are actually asking for information.

Now one of the things they say like all myths, this myth can be understood in many sense and applied to the human situation in many different contexts, it is important to remember that myth is actually a very good word that does not mean a fictional account. If you look in the dictionary one of the meanings of a myth and I will give you the exact definition according to Webster “a real or fictional story that reflects the ideals of a pre-literate culture”. So obviously Islam has foundational myths. It is a perfectly acceptable word unfortunately it gives the hint of something being not true I mean we tend to think of something mythological as a fable or fabrication, that is not how they are using the word here. The point of a myth in fact the definition that an American critic of literature gave was that it is so true as to be unbelievable. One of the things about a myth is it is a universal story and that is why the power of myth is that...and obviously if people have read the hero with a thousand faces by Joseph Campbell, he is somebody who just saw the same myth in all these different stories because it is a universal story of the heroes journey and certainly we believe as Muslims that it is a true story.

We do not believe it is a fictional account but we also have to remove ideas of anthropomorphism and the idea...this is language explaining something that happened on a realm that we really have no access to other than what is described for us in the Quran so that is important to remember and one of the things about Adam was, he was given all the names is again one of things about the power of language because if you can measure and if you can label you have power. People in power label the powerless so a freedom fighter will be called a terrorist by the people in power and that is why the British considered George Washington a terrorist whereas the people at that time who were fighting in the continental army they saw themselves as fighting for liberty and freedom. So that is the power of the nature of naming which does not mean that everybody claiming to be a freedom fighter is not a terrorist, I mean there are people out there, terrorists, anytime you bring in civilians and indiscriminately kill people you have an element of terrorism and certainly there is state terrorism and there is individual terrorism but the point being the power to name or label people and that is something that the mass media obviously has. They can make people look like they are insane because they have this power, it is the power to name or label people and that is something that the mass media obviously has. They can make people look like they are insane because they have this

power, it is the power to name them. They already determined the discourse when they put you on as the extreme left position, now we are going to hear from the extreme left so they labelled you and they have already defined the discourse there.

It is the power of naming so naming is power and that is why powerless people tend to be people without language and that is one of things like Paulo Freire, wrote a lot of books like Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Pedagogy for Freedom. He spent his life teaching Brazilian peasants how to read and write because he really felt their powerlessness was based on not having language.

One of the things that the Cherokee did in this country, the great Cherokee Sequoia who was the great Cherokee leader who is actually half Scottish but he developed an alphabet for his people because he said the power of the white people resides in their ability to write. He saw their power was in language. So he felt he could empower the Cherokee and that was a really interesting experiment and it almost succeeded had it not been for Andrew Jackson who acted unconstitutionally in forcing the Cherokee, you know the famous trail of tears and things like that but language is something that if you do not have it you are powerless and that is why articulation and the ability to speak is so important and that is why Islam emphasises the grammar and rhetoric if learning these things because it is an empowering element.

Now they mention here also that this idea of microcosm and macrocosm came from the Greeks and I do not think that is true because Imam Ali said “you think you are some insignificant body or entity and the entire universe is in you” so Imam Ali that is microcosm, that is what it means, a small universe.

So the human being is seen as a small universe and part of the reason that Adam was able to name everything is that everything was in him because you cannot know something outside of yourself. If you do not recognise it from inside of yourself and that is why we have mineral in us, I mean everything you see so the earth is in you. We have mineral, we have vegetable, we have animal, it is all there so when you see a tree you recognise vegetation because it is in you, when you see the sun fire is in you, it is all there. That is what caloric energy is, it is heat so everything you see out there is in you.

We are even made up of stars, I mean we know that now, modern astronomy understands that our bodies has constituents of stars that were constituted of the material that stars are made of. One of the interesting things about a human being is the human being, the body is placed on a scale of magnitudes between atom and between a star. In other words we fit right in the middle of the smallest elements in creation and of the biggest elements and that is mathematical, you can actually work that out so we are this barzakh between the smallest elements and the biggest elements. We are right in the middle and we have this ability to bridge the unseen and seen world.

Finally here the reason we have been given this viceregency is that if we follow God's instructions on the universal level, turtles, demons, squirrels, scorpions, mice are all following but viceregency is specifically a human quality because a human being is able to follow instructions through his or her free will.

Therefore Adam was created to be vicegerant of God, he first had to be God's servant in other words people were created to represent God on the face of the earth, in order to fulfill this function properly, they must submit to God's will as revealed through the Prophets. And so really that is at the essence of the Islamic teaching is that what we are here to do is to submit to the will of God as best as we can as servants. In doing that we enter into a type of harmony with the world so we are not alien to the world. We are part of the world but also we are part of another world which is the next world and so again we become this bridge this barzakh and realisation of that tahqiq ul uboodiyah is a lifelong journey, you don't just do it in one day and one evening and you can learn all this stuff theoretically and fill your heads with a lot of information but if it is not practiced, if it does not become part of your practice then it is difficult and it is something you will struggle with all of your lives and you need company, you need reminders, you need people to put you in your place and inshAllah the goal is to get through this world in one spiritual piece both peace and piece to get through out it and get onto the other side and then the important thing is also to expect great things from your Lord because the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) he said that Allah tells us I am in the opinion of my servant so if my servant thinks good of Me, he will find good and if He thinks bad of Me, he will find bad" and that is why the hadith says "whoever wakes up in the morning if you find good, say alhamdulillah. Praise to be God". Other than that he did not say if you find evil, let him only blame his own soul because you are still not seeing correctly what is going on in the world. You are not seeing that if you really believe in God, it is all good, it is not an exaggeration, it is all good, it is not an exaggeration, it is all good, if you believe in Allah and then it becomes that you need to conform to the divine and not make the divine conform to you because what moderns

want to do is to make God conform to them so we make God just as we are and it is not going to work.

You have to conform to the divine, how the divine wants you to be and just finally that anything that occurs in the world and Shaykh Muhammad mentioned this last night but it is important to remind people that were not there is that Ibn Abbas said that no calamity every afflicted me in that I saw three blessings in it and the first one was that it was not worse than it was. The fact that it was not worse than it is, is a blessing and you should show gratitude. The next one is that it was in my worldly affairs and not in my deen and that is a blessing. In the dua of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) “O God do not make our calamities in our religion” The assumption there is already there are calamities in the world. You are in the world and you are going to have calamities and you might have not have seen the worst of it yet insha'Allah Allah makes things easy for all of us but you might not have seen the worst of it yet. If you think what you have seen is bad, you might not have seen the worse of it yet, so if the calamity is not in your deen, do not worry about it because dunya is not so important that you should get upset about it like that. You should not give it as much power to affect you in that way, to depress you, if you lose all your money, what can you do about it? I am depressed, why? Because I associated with no money happiness and now my money is gone so I have to be unhappy so you therefore have made an assumption about the nature of happiness, that it is only material goods. So it is a philosophy, that is a philosophy.

Then finally that it was in this world and not in the next world. So if the calamity is in this world that is a blessing that it was not in the next world because you would rather have your calamities here than there.

According to the hadith of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam), everything that happens in this world is a purification so it might be that you are getting your wrongs removed that is why calamities are the holidays of people seeking God. A lot of people might not like that but if you take that on it is not that you ask for calamities because the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “do not ask for calamities because you do not know if you will be able to bear them but ask Allah for well being” so we ask for wellbeing but when the calamities come, masha'Allah. That is what happens so alhamdulillah. Any questions?

Cannot hear question

I think the best thing to do is to create our own venues. Do not allow venues out there to dictate your agendas and things like that. I mean things like alcohol you cannot talk to people when they are drinking anyway I mean that is the problem with alcohol and it is not good to be around it, we believe it is the devil, it is the jinn alcohol, it is what they call it, gin. I will have a gin on the rocks. I mean man if they really knew what they were saying, I will have Iblees on the rocks. The rocks are brimstone. So you just want to stay away from that kind of energy. Cheese tastes fine without wine. Have grape juice, grape juices tastes a lot better than wine.

You would be surprised how much you can...if you really want to keep up with that type of popular culture so you can talk to people you would be surprised how much just from reading, I have read articles about films that I can talk about without ever having seen the film. You do not have to go watch a film and waste two hours of your life for something. I saw a film once by Khirasani who won Cannes Film Festival. He was Iranian. I think it was Khirasani, cannot remember. I was interested just wide this film that won the Cannes film festival was being made in Iran where apparently they have all this artistic censorship but at the end of the film they had an interview with him. The thing about the film is it almost put me to sleep. At the end of the film he says they ask him what kind of films do you like? He said "I like films that put people to sleep but then they cannot stop thinking about them after that". The thing about American films is you go watch it for 2 hours and you are at the edge of your seat and you walk out of the theatre and you cannot remember anything like what was it about because it is all spectacle. There is no thought and then they asked him about censorship and he said every artist is censored. It is just where do you draw the lines of censorship. He said Americans have censorship. I mean there are things that they cannot go beyond simple as that. In Iran we are basically not allowed to deal with two things: sex and violence. It forces us to create films that are actually intelligent and he said when Hollywood was not allowed to use sex and violence they actually made intelligent films He said now the films are all stupid and the reason is all gratuitous spectacle, it is just stimulating people's lower energies. It is all it is because people respond to violence. It is very intense to watch violence and so there is adrenaline. It is a very powerful drug. People get addicted to it, adrenaline junkies. Romans used to go and watch Christians eaten by the lions, we do the same thing when we go watch these Arnold Schwarznegger films of people getting their heads blown off. It is sanitised but it is the same gore. It is a human thing. We see the Romans as decadent, why do not see it about ourselves, that is all decadence. That is what it is, it is vulgarity. It is decadence and the thing about it is thresholds get higher and higher and so you need more stimulation, you need more violence, the sexuality becomes more perverse. That is

what happens. Film has immense potential because it is a very powerful medium but it is a medium spectacle. You never want to be in a theatre if there is an earthquake or something, how do you justify that with God? Watching a movie when you died

The reason Plata outlawed the poets in the Republic is because of the whole danger of entertainment, what entertainment does in a society images and.....the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) he had some entertainment and that is something about Islam that a lot of modern Muslims are not aware of, that there is room for poetry, art, there is room for certain types of music and things like that. Traditionally it always existed in the Muslim world but it should be done in a certain way, it should not become something that takes people away from God. I mean we need to rethink a lot of things and be more creative about how we speak to people out there.

I mean ultimately everybody is dealing with their mortality, they are dealing with real essential issues and while Christianity and Judaism are true religions and we believe in them as an obligation, we are obliged to believe in them, we view them now as models of like a car that is no longer taking you there, it does not work anymore and so you can sit in it and feel like you are in a car and certainly it is vehicle but is it taking you where you want to go? And on the other hand for Muslims, for most Muslims, their Islam is stuck in the mud. It is not that the car does not work, it is like you have driven into the mud by your own stupidity. I will never forget I was in Mauritania and there was this man that was driving in a gap and there is this big mud puddle and there was a big dry thing on the side and he was bragging like what a great driver he was and when we were coming upto it we said like go over there and he said no no no I know what I am doing and we got stuck in this mud and we had paid this guy to drive us. We ended up, we could not get the car out, we had to walk in the middle of the desert for about 5 hours. But the point is he drove it into the mud. It was a perfectly good car, the road was there and he just took it into the mud to kind of I did it my way or something like that.

But that is the thing about people's Islam, they drive it into their mud and then they are like why is this not getting me anywhere. Well you left the road you have gone off road. You mean it does not have four wheel drive. It has five wheel drive: Shahada, Prayers, Zakah, Fasting and Hajj. But you have to be on the shariah and on the road. They are absolutes yeah that it is, they become absolutes and you will know them because you remember this world.

If you were put in jannah and you never had any knowledge of this place but in jannah you have memory of this place, you do not have painful memories but you will remember. You are aware of hell and the people of hell are aware of paradise so the opposites are known still. Paradise is pure good and hell is pure evil whereas in here it is all mixed.

Well that is the point, their blind, deaf and dumbness is like this, they will not open their eyes, they will not take their hands off their ears, they will not speak and in the next world they admit that, that is what the Quran says in Surah Tabarak they will finally admit it was their fault, they took themselves, that is why the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "every soul wakes up ransomed and either it sells it to God or destroys it" so that is a human choice. And there is a verse "people do the acts of good until they are one handspan away from Paradise or arms length and then the decree precedes them and they do some action of the fire". That hadith, there is another riwayat where it says "to what it appears to people" and that point is that those people's hearts they were hypocrites, is that they will do things that expose themselves before they die. That is why Sidi Ahmed Zarruq says all the things that people do in this world that are bad in order to obtain things that they deem good, those things will be the cause of the thing that they were trying to free themselves from. So if somebody learns astrology to protect themselves from a harmful death, he will have a harmful death. If somebody learns alchemy to like enrich himself, he will be impoverished. It has the opposite so the thing you go to literally has the opposite effect on you in this world.

I mean Harut and Marut are a problem because they are angels but they are teaching something that is harmful and that in a sense is almost a negative revelation which is interesting I mean the idea of you know that you could have a negative revelation which brings in the whole idea of opposites and things like that again but Allahu Alim.

The thing about the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) he was affected by magic but he was given the last two surahs in the Quran and he never left them after that and what happened to him he was not affected in his understanding but he was physically affected.

Sulayman was not given magic because there is a difference between magic. Magic is using means that are in the creation. There are two types of magic. One is called which is like the magic of David Copperfield, people like that. It is the ability to create illusions, optical illusions and then the other type of magic is manipulation of things in creation through magic. Both of

them are prohibited in Islam. What the Prophets do, in other words when Musa threw down the staff and it became a snake, it was not magic. I mean of the things if you read 1001 nights which is certainly not anything to get aqeedah from or anything like that but there is all these kind of interesting things where the genie does all this magic and then the magic when the genie is no longer working for the person all the stuff disappears so like the genie will make him a palace but when the genie now has a new master the palace just disappears so all the treasure goes back to rocks.

That is a good analogy for what magic is. It is insubstantial in reality even though it appears to be real whereas what happens with the Prophets is that it is real. It is something that actually comes into existence. So when Musa pulled his hand out and it was white that was real without any harm. It was not vitiligo or leprosy, it was light that came out. That was real, it was not magic so the difference is one is a manipulator the other is that Allah is directly not through means, there are no means, magic is usually means in creation whereas the miracle there are no means. It is direct from God and that is why people that witness it, see it for that.

If you have ever seen a film of somebody shot in reality you know I saw some films from Afghanistan during the jihad. I saw these Russian soldiers, I will never forget it because it was so different from what Hollywood does. I mean it was very real and that is the nature of miracle in relation to the magic is that it is real and that difference between art and life, we can see that a film is not real. You come out of it, you can fall into the willful suspension of disbelief which you are watching the film but when you come out you are back in reality. It is not the same, it is not real.

Magic in many ways, it is interesting because Simayu is a magic where you create images. I don't think cinema is related to it. It is interesting that in many ways that film is very magical like that, it is a powerful magic. It is definitely slight of hand because these frames that are done to create an optical illusion because they are still frames, creating the optical illusion of motion so technically by shariah I think the traditional ulema would have seen it as magic, as a type of magic.

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/Vision-of-Islam#sthash.kMKFzNDt.dpuf>

Transcript for TV Truth and Technomania

Event Name: TV Truth and Technomania

Transcript Author: SheikhyNotes Blog

Description: Source: Unknown. Found on SheikhyNotes Blog.

Date Transcribed: 12/22/2010 12:00:00 AM

Original URL: <http://sheikhynotes.blogspot.com/search?q=How+the+Quran+was+compiled>

This interview of Imam Hamza Yusuf was conducted in Calgary, Alberta during Islamic Awareness Week organized by the Muslim Students' Association (MSA) of the University of Calgary. The interviewer was Sr. Randa Hammadieh. It was compiled by Sr. Randa and Br. Ibrahim Danial.

RANDA HAMMADIEH: In your travels in the Muslim world, what cultural practices did you notice that struck you as being different from those of the West?

HAMZA YUSUF: In the West, there is a strong separation between young and old. In Muslim tradition, on the other hand, youth continues until the age of 40. This is the idea of "shababiya." In the Western civilization, the idea of adolescence is purely a social construct. The generation gap in the States isn't necessarily universal to all cultures although the US is doing a good job of exporting their monoculture all over the world. This happens because people are being exposed to the television and movies of the dominant culture. So you will see US cultural phenomena now all over the world.

RH: What are your thoughts on Muslim youth and public education of today?

HY: I think modern school is a negative experience. I believe you can learn more out of school than in it. There is now a universal education system, whether you are in an Arab country, China or somewhere else. This universal education is only going to vary according to the political atmosphere of the given country. For example, in Iraq, the indoctrination is probably more obvious whereas in the US it is just more subtle. School is an artificial construct to socialize individuals into a group identity. The whole idea of a "school of fish" is that everyone swims together whereas traditional Islamic education was completely individualized. What it did was give people all those tools (in the West called "liberal arts") such as grammar, rhetoric, and logic, through which people could actually think and use their brains.

In public high schools, you are not given tools, you are given information and data. In fact, a metaphor that is used in education today is that you're basically a hard drive that needs to be written with a given software. You will then fulfill whatever are the social needs of the society. Schooling today is designed only to matriculate people into the logic of the system itself. Then people end up in meaningless jobs doing meaningless work, and never really think about what type of society they're contributing to.

RH: If there was one thing in your travels in the Muslim world that left a distinctive impression upon you, what would it be?

HY: What a horrific condition the Muslim countries are in! The Muslim world is now like a rape victim. Colonization was like the raping trauma, and the Muslim world has never been able to get up and go on with life of the Muslim world in its entirety by European powers, who for centuries were seen as backward and barbaric, has had really devastating effects.

Now in the Muslim world, Muslims seem to dress in pale imitation of Western people. Some look like caricatures of Western people. This is indicative of the state of some Muslims who aren't very inspiring anymore. The whole world once looked up to the Muslims as models.

RH: What do you say to Muslims who seem to glorify the past when they were at their peak?

HY: This is all pathetic nostalgia for returning to the glory of the past and its romanticism. The past has nothing to do with us. That was them. We are a whole other people. It's not our past, it was their present. Now it's over. That's why the Quran has this concept of letting go of your fathers, and not being proud of your fathers because they are not you! You have to create your own future. Don't be like an old war veteran. However, it is important to have some historical continuity because the Qur'an says "Look at the people who went before" as the way of learning lessons.

One thing that is wrong with some modern Muslim mentality is the idea of "If we do what they did, we will be glorious." Someone asked me, "How can we get an empire back?" There is this idea that Islam is all about glory. No! It's like you exercise to maintain your health, but the exercise is not your goal. It's just the means to achieve your goal. In the same way that if you seek the contentment of Allah, one of the side effects of that is that Allah elevates you and gives you "tamkeen," but that is not the goal. It's just a side effect.

Now you don't hear people talk about Allah very much, just about Islam. The Quran says, "To your Lord is your goal." The path of coming to know God results in victory because of your struggling for truth. One of the things about sincerely struggling for truth is that Allah gives you victory by the nature of the struggle. It follows that by the nature of the struggle itself, you gain worldly success. You see, worldly success has nothing to do with the intentions. Because if those are your intentions, then you will never gain worldly success. In fact, Allah will give the "kafiroon" success over you. If the people of truth are not seeking truth, but instead the benefits of truth (merely the side effects), then they will never achieve them.

RH: Then how should Muslims look at life?

HY: Life is mundane. Life is praying, getting up for Fajr and day-to-day chores. All this "glory" some aspire to is just an abstract in the mind. And the reality of it is even the kings of the past had to get up in the morning and go through daily routines. Life is by its nature perfunctory and Islam is just to harmonize it, put it into perspective, and make its goals dignified goals, instead of low, worldly goals.

RH: Now that you are residing in the US you must have had some exposure to the technological hegemony occurring. How do you view this in the light of Islam?

HY: Modern technology is just an example of when people's goals are totally distorted. Modern technology arose out of very strong corporate interests in creating the massification of society where everybody needs a TV or a stereo. This doesn't mean that Islam is against technology. Technology, by its nature, is everything that humans produce. And by our nature we do make things. Islamic technology would be very humane. To serve people as opposed to the opposite.

Muslims do not believe in progress. Progress is completely antithetical to the Islamic doctrine. Muslims believe that human society reached its pinnacle in Medina in the 7th century. This is the best society that has ever existed. The verse which says "Today We have completed your Religion..." made Umar (ra) weep because he realized that nothing is ever completed except that it begins to decrease.

If the goal of life is to establish Deen, then that is the highest progress that humans can achieve and therefore all this modern technological madness is an exteriorization of the human impulse to know. Because we have become such gross materialists, all of our intellectual and spiritual endeavors have been completely centered and focused on the outward, the "Dhahir" and the inside has been completely forgotten. Now there is even a massive interest in how we can preserve this life here, manifested by studies in cryonics, genetic engineering and cloning.

RH: So would you say human beings tend to serve modern technology rather than it serving us?

HY: Yes. Modern technology dehumanizes by its nature, because it is based on massification (a computer in every home). Everyone is reduced to sitting around looking at blinking cathode rays on a screen. There is no human exchange anymore; people just send e-mail. People get nervous if you start talking like this because most Muslims are really embarrassed by the simplicity of the Prophet's (pbuh) life. Many don't want to admit that he lived in a house devoid of furniture; that he sewed his own shoes and collected firewood. The Prophet (pbuh) wasn't interested in improving that aspect of his life.

Improving ones standard of living has become an idol whereas I think Islam lowers your standard of living. You become content with less. When the Prophet's (pbuh) wife put a cushion

in his bed he got upset. He consciously lowered his standard of living.

The truth is the whole world can't support a bunch of consumers. Western technology is based on the exploitation of the other 90 percent of the world. All our wonderful technological achievements are based on the rest of the world living in abject poverty. Through enjoying the fruits of Western technology, we are in fact participating in the destruction of indigenous cultures all over the world and the impoverishment of those people.

RH: What are your thoughts on the teenage phenomenon and its significance today?

HY: It's an artificial construct intended to sell rap, \$100 basketball shoes and \$80 jeans. It's an invention of consumer society that doesn't exist in traditional Islamic or Western cultures. People should be done with school by the time they're 15. In traditional European societies, those who studied had their bachelors by the age of 14 and were teaching at 18 at Cambridge and Oxford. This is documented. Spending 12 years in school is an artificial construct designed to occupy time-space in which the society really doesn't have the ability to allow these people to enter the workforce because it is saturated.

Teenage phenomenon destroys human society. Historically, agrarian-based societies (which the majority of Muslim countries are) view community as absolutely essential for survival, whereas in industrial societies community is a luxury.

A sickness of some Muslims today is that they've gotten into the whole age issue. Much like racism and sexism, it's identifying people with quantitative measurements. We don't know how old many of the sahabi were. It wasn't an obsession. In fact, the Prophet (pbuh) tried to break the jahali concept by putting Osama ibn Zaid as the head of an army when he was only 17. Age in Islam is about having gray hair and not having gray hair.

If you don't have gray hair you're called a "shabaab" and you're supposed to respect people with gray hair. If you have gray hair you're called "sheikh" and you're supposed to have mercy and compassion on those who don't have gray hairs. That is a much healthier way of looking at it. In Islamic knowledge, we knew Ibn Malik was considered a sheikh which literally means "old man" when he was 17 years old. Islam doesn't box you into a category. Age is about where you are spiritually, not where you are numerically.

I think that 40 year olds should sit with 18 year olds, and in a spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood, learn from each other. The sahaba had 15 year olds in their Prophet's majlis with 60 year olds. Muslim schools were never segregated by age. "Allah created everything and He guided it in its own specific way and manner."

We are an Ummah of labeling and labels are from Western society. In labels, everything has a name and nothing has a meaning.

RH: Given all your experiences, travels, and years, what do you know for sure about the world?

HY: Well, that there is a lot of truth to Sayidina Ali saying that "Youth is a type of madness and old age is a type of wisdom." I think that a crisis of the Muslim world is that we have an incredibly young society and they are by and large ignorant, having lost their historical link, and so there hasn't been a lot of guidance from the older generation.

Many Muslim youth are confused, but as this generation of Muslims reach maturity, an interesting scenario is going to occur. As the young people in the Islamic movement in the U.S. and Canada move into their forties, there is going to be much growth and guidance for the younger people, inshallah.

We are in a really bad time, but we should see it as a temporal kind of condition. This is not the way it has always been, nor is it the way it will always be, inshallah. I know we just have to be careful as a community in the steps we take. We have to deliberate more than necessary than if we had strong guidance. We are now living in a very exciting time, a time for much potential growth, and I believe that Muslims in Canada and the US will certainly rise to the occasion, inshallah.

End of interview.

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/TV-Truth-and-Technomania#sthash.UkS0fv2A.dpuf>

Transcript for The Alchemy of Happiness

Event Name: The Alchemy of Happiness

Transcript Author:

Description:

Date Transcribed: 1/1/2000 12:00:00 AM

Original URL:

The suffering of the world is spoken of in terms of wars, starvation, hatred, competition, and the struggle of the survivors of the fittest. Yet all the suffering of the world originates in the human heart. Every crime committed, every act of oppression, every callous cruelty, and every injustice to the self or others emanates from the hearts of men. However, for every wrong wrought by the human heart, a thousand acts of mercy have issued forth: every mother's love, every child's forgiveness, every teacher's care, and every father's concern for the well-being of his progeny—all have their source in the core of human being, the human heart. If we are to right the world, we must first rectify our hearts, and this is why every revelation has been granted to humanity: to make firm our hearts.

The most oft-recited prayer of the blessed Prophet, peace and prayers be upon him, was? O Revolver of the hearts, make firm my heart upon the straight way? In no equivocal terms, the Quran states? On the day of Judgment, when neither wealth nor children will avail, only one who brings forth a sound heart? A sound heart! The soundest of hearts was the heart of the messenger of Allah, peace and prayers be upon him, who through his purity and singularity of intention transformed the world. His teaching remains, and the challenge is for each of us to take it and with it transform our hearts and thereby the very world in which we now reside. Time is of the essence as the diseases of the heart, so prevalent among men now, threaten the very biosphere we have been commissioned to protect. Before you is a text that gives practical means and methods for transformation. Learn them, and use them, and then pass them on.

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

Purification of the Heart

The Heart

Allah subhanahu wa t'ala says, "On that day nothing will benefit the human being, neither wealth nor children, only the one who brings Allah a sound heart." A sound heart is one that is free of defects and spiritual blemishes. Though the spiritual heart is centred in the physical heart, the heart being referred to here is the spiritual heart, not the physical heart. In ancient Chinese medicine, the heart houses what is known as "chen" which is "a spirit." The Chinese character for "thinking," "thought," "love," "virtue," and "intending to listen" all contain the ideogram for the heart. In fact, in every culture in the world, people use metaphors that deal with the heart; in English, we call people who are cruel, "hard-hearted people." There is also the idea of having "a cold heart" and "a warm heart." People who do not hide their emotions well "wear their hearts on their sleeves." When deeply affected, we say, "he affected me in my heart" or "in my core." In fact, the English word "core" means "inner most," and in Arabic, the equivalent "lub" comes from the Latin word, meaning "heart." Thus, the core of the human being is indeed the heart. The word "courage" also comes from the same root word as for "heart" because courage is centred in the heart. The most ancient Indo-European word for heart means "that which leaps." The heart leaps or beats in the breast of man. For example, people say, "my heart skipped a beat" in reaction to seeing somebody. Many such metaphors are used for the heart.

Three Types of People

The ancients were aware of the spiritual diseases of the heart, and this is certainly at the essence of the Islamic teaching. One of the first things the Quran does is define three types of people: the mu'minun, the kafirun, and the munafiqun. The mu'minun are people whose hearts are alive while the kafirun are people whose hearts are dead. The munafiqun are people who have a disease or a sickness in their hearts; thus, Allah subhanahu wa t'ala says, "In their hearts is a disease, and they were increased in their disease." This is also in accordance with another verse: "When their hearts deviated, Allah made them deviate further." When somebody turns away from Allah subhanahu wa t'ala, Allah subhanahu wa t'ala causes them to deviate even further from the truth.

The Heart and the Brain

The actual physical heart in our breast beats at about 100,000 times a day, pumping two gallons

of blood per minute, 100 gallons per hour, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year for an entire life time! The vascular system that sends this life-giving blood is over 60,000 miles long: it is more than two times the circumference of the earth. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the heart starts beating before the brain is formed; the heart begins to beat without any central nervous system. The dominant theory was that the central nervous system is what is controlling the entire human being from the brain, yet we know now that in fact the nervous system does not initiate the heartbeat. It is actually self-initiated; we would say, it is initiated by Allah subhanahu wa t'ala.

The heart is the centre of the human being. Many people think the brain is the centre of consciousness, yet the Quran clearly states, "They have hearts that they are not able to understand with." According to the Muslims, the centre of human consciousness is the heart and not the brain itself, and it is only recently that human beings have learned there are over 40,000 neurons in the heart; in other words, there are cells in the heart that are communicating. Now, it is understood that there is two-way communication between the brain and the heart: the brain sends messages to the heart, but the heart also sends messages to the brain. The brain receives these messages from the heart, which reach the amygdala and the thalamus. The cortex receives input from the amygdala and thalamus that it processes to produce emotion; the new cortex relates to learning and reasoning. These processes are recent discoveries, and although we do not fully understand them, we do know that the heart is an extremely sophisticated organ.

According to the hadith, the heart is a source of knowledge. The Prophet, sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam, said that wrong action is what irritates the heart. Thus, the heart actually knows wrong actions, and this is one of the reasons why people can do terrible things, but, ultimately, they are affected negatively. In *Crime and Punishment*, the brilliant Russian author Dostoevsky's indicates that crime itself is the perpetrator's punishment because human beings have to live with the result of their actions: their souls are affected. When people do something against the heart, they act against the soul, and that actually affects human beings to the degree that they will go into a state of spiritual agitation, and people will use many ways to cover this up. This is what *kufir* is: "*kufir*" means "covering up." To hide their agitation, people use alcohol, drugs, and sexual experimentation; they also seek power, wealth, and fame, taking themselves into a state of heedlessness, submerging themselves into the ephemeral world which causes them to forget their essential nature and to forget their hearts. Thus, people become cut off from their hearts.

Wrong Actions Sicken the Heart

One of the things about being cut off from the heart is that the more cut off from the heart one becomes, the sicker the heart grows because the heart needs nourishment, and heedlessness starves the spiritual heart. When one goes into a state of unawareness of Allah and the akhirah, one becomes unaware of the infinite world in relation to the finite world, unaware that we are in this world for a temporary period. When we look at the infinite world in relation to the finite world, suddenly our concerns become focused on the infinite world and not on the finite world. On the other hand, when people are completely immersed within the finite world, believing that they will be here forever, believing that they will not be taken to account for their actions, this action in and of itself ultimately leads to the spiritual death of the hearts. However, before it dies and becomes putrid and completely fowl, the heart will show many symptoms. These are the spiritual diseases of the hearts.

Shubahat and Shahawat: Two Types of Diseases

There are two types of diseases of the heart. The first are called shubahat, and these are diseases that relate to understanding. For instance, if somebody is fearful of his provision from Allah, afraid he will not get his food for the day, then there is a disease in his heart because a sound heart has complete trust in Allah subhanahu wa t'ala, and a sick heart has doubt. For this reason, a sound heart does not worry. It is the nafs (ego), shaytan, hawa (caprice), and dunya (the love of this ephemeral world) that lead to this state of fear or of anxiety. The heart in it of itself is an organ designed to be in a state of stillness, but the stillness will only come about by the remembrance of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala. The Quran states, "Isn't it by the dhikr of Allah that the heart is stilled?" This is what the heart wants: it wants to remember Allah subhanahu wa t'ala. When Allah is not remembered, the heart goes into a state of agitation: it goes in a state of turmoil, and it becomes diseased because it is not being fed. Just as we need to breathe because cells need life-giving oxygen and if we stop breathing, cells die, similarly, the heart also needs to breathe, and the breath of the heart is the remembrance of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala. Dhikr is what feeds and nourishes the heart. The company of good people is the food and exercise of the heart. All of these things are necessary for the heart to be sound and healthy, and this is basically the purpose of Revelation. The Quran has come to remind people that our hearts need nourishment. Thus, Allah subhanahu wa t'ala tells us that the human being who will be in a good state in the next world is the one who brings a sound heart.

When we are born, we enter the world in a state of fitrah: the original inherent nature of the

human being; then we learn to be anxious. We learn anxiety from our mothers, fathers, and society. Thus, the Quran says that the human being is created in a state of anxiety (hala'), and the one group of people who are removed from this state of anxiety are the musallin: the people of prayer. This "prayer" is not the five daily obligatory prayers; rather, it is the prayer of people who are always in a state of prayer (dhikr); they are always in a state of connection with Allah subhanahu wa t'ala, and this is the highest station. This is the station of people who are not diverted from the remembrance of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala by buying, commerce, or anything else. They are the ones who remember Allah subhanahu wa t'ala, as the Quran states, "standing, sitting, and reclining on their sides." These are the people who are not the people of heedlessness (ghafla).

The second type of the diseases of the heart is called shahawat, and these are the base desires of the self. For instance, food and sex are shahawat; they are appetites. These become diseases when they grow out of proportion from their natural states. In Islam, we have a method or a means by which our hearts can be remedied and return to their sound state again. The dhikr that the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam did more than any other dhikr was "Oh Turner-Overer of the hearts, make my heart firm on your deen," and it is important that Muslims be reminded of this.

The Text: Mat-hartul Qulub

In Arabic, "Mat-hara" is ism makaan (a noun of place), and it means "a tool of tahara (purification)," and that is what Mat-hartul Qulub is. This text is the alchemy of the heart: it explains how to transform the heart. Mat-hartul Qulub was written by a great scholar, Shaykh Muhammad Maulud al-Musawir al-Ya'qubi from Mauritania. He was a brilliant scholar of West Africa who mastered all of the Islamic sciences as well as the inward sciences of Islam. He wrote this didactic poem in order to teach people the means to purify their hearts because he looked around and realised that everybody he saw had a diseased heart. Though he recognised the benefit in learning the abstract sciences of Islam, such as grammar, rhetoric, and logic, he felt that people may not have a great deal of need for that knowledge given the fact that on the Day of Judgment, the heart is the only thing about which we will be asked. The state of our hearts is the only thing that may benefit us because "actions are by intentions" as the hadith states. Since all our actions are rooted in intentions, and the place of intention is the heart, every action we do is rooted in our hearts. Thus, in reality when we are asked about our actions, we are asked about the intentions behind the actions, and given the fact that intentions emanate from the heart, what we are actually being asked about is the human heart. When Shaykh Muhammad Maulud realised this, he said that suddenly Allah subhanahu wa t'ala inspired him to write this text, and

he based it upon many of the previous texts that had gone before, such as the last book of the Ihya 'Ulumudin by Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali.

Rectification Begins with the Self

If we look at the world today, the tribulations, the trials, and every war that we have, we will see that every bit of human suffering is rooted in human hearts. The reason people are aggressive against other people is due to diseases of the heart: covetousness, the desire to conquer, the desire to exploit other people, and the desire to steal their natural resources are all from diseases of the heart. A sound heart cannot commit such acts. Every murderer, every rapist, every idolater, every fowl person, every person showing an act of cruelty has a diseased heart because these actions emanate from diseased hearts. If the hearts were sound, none of these actions would be a reality. Therefore, if we wish to change our world, we cannot go about it by attempting to rectify the outward; rather, we change the world by rectifying the inward because it is the inward that precedes the outward.

In reality, everything that we see outside of us comes from the unseen world. The phenomenal world emerges from the unseen world, and all actions emerge from the unseen realm of our hearts. Thus, if we want to rectify our actions, we must first rectify our hearts. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the famous American preacher and civil rights activist, said that in order for people to condemn injustice, they have to follow four stages: the first stage is that they must ascertain that injustices are indeed being perpetrated. People must point out the injustices, and in his case, it was injustices against the African-American people in the United States. The second stage is to negotiate: people must go to the oppressors and demand justice. If the oppressors refuse, then Dr. King said that the third stage is self-purification. He said that we must ask ourselves, are we ourselves wrongdoers? Are we ourselves oppressors? The final stage is to take action once we have looked into ourselves.

One of the things the Muslims of the modern world fail to recognise is that when we look at all of the terrible things that are happening to us, we often refuse to look at ourselves and ask ourselves, why are these things happening to us? If we ask that in all sincerity, the answer will come back in no uncertain terms that this is all from our own selves. We have brought all of the suffering upon ourselves. This is the only empowering position that we can take, and this is the Quranic position. Allah subhanahu wa t'ala says quite clearly that He places some of the oppressors over other oppressors because of what their hands were earning. According to Fakharudin ar-Razi's explanation, radi Allahu 'anhu, this verse means that whenever there is

oppression in the earth, it is a result of other people's oppression. Thus, those people who are being aggressed upon are being oppressed because of their own oppression. However, this is obviously with the exception of tribulation. There are definitely times when the mu'minun are tried, but if they respond accordingly with patience and perseverance, Allah subhanahu wa t'ala always gives them victory.

The Impure Oppress and the Pure Elevate

There is no doubt that the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam and the sahaba were being oppressed when they were in Makkah, but Allah subhanahu wa t'ala later gave them victory. Within 23 years, the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam was not only no longer oppressed, he had conquered the entire Arabian peninsula, and all of the people who had previously oppressed him were begging him for mercy. Even though they deserved to be recompensed with punishment, the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam forgave them, and this is the difference between somebody whose heart is pure and somebody whose heart is impure. The impure people oppress, and the pure people not only forgive their oppressors, they actually conquer them by the power of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala, and then they elevate them. This is what Muslims must recognise: the only solution to all of our problems is that we have to purify ourselves, and this is what Mat-hartul Qulub is about; it is a book of self-purification. If we take this book seriously, work on our hearts, and actually implement what we learn from it, we will begin to see changes in our lives, around us, and within our own family dynamics. It is a blessing that we have this book and that this teaching still exists in our community. All that is left is for us to take this teaching upon ourselves and to take it seriously.

Medicine for the Diseased Heart

If you use the techniques that are given by the imams, you will see results. However, it is just as the prescription that the doctor gives you: the doctor can only write the prescription; he can give you the medicine, but he cannot force you to take the medicine. It is left for us to take the medicine. The imams have given us the medicine: our teaching is there; it is clear; it does work; and we can change ourselves with it. If we do, Allah subhanahu wa t'ala has promised that we will be rewarded in this world and in the next. Thus, all that is left for us to do now is to go through these diseases and then set out to implement their cures in sha Allah.

Introduction and the Disease of Miserliness

Praise is due to the One who has clarified what is needed to purify the heart and adorn it.

Praise and peace be upon Muhammad and his family as long as he is the means by which it is achieved and grant him safety.

The lights of the pearls of tasawwuf in relation to other lights is like the pearl in relation to the oyster shell.

Or like the ninety-nine lines written in gold next to the one line written in ink.

Having said this, the condition of people, in this time of preoccupation and movement, seems to seek from me a book about the rectification of the hearts. Suddenly, I find a down-pouring of the bounty of Allah.

I responded by bringing forth a clarifying poem that fulfills the most important needs.

It draws the distant close even for one of slow comprehension, and with it the illiterate becomes literate.

Courtesy with Allah

I began by starting with the heart of beginnings (which is courtesy spelled backwards)

Since this is the highest and noblest of beginnings.

Thus, have courtesy with Allah, the High, the Majestic by practicing incessantly modesty and humility,

Dejected out of shame, humbled, imploring Him.

Shaykh Muhammad Maulud says in this poem, "Fa qultu badian bi qalbi al-bada'," and this line has two meanings. The first, more literal meaning is "I begin with the heart of beginnings." The word "al-bada'," has to do with "beginning," and the word "qalb" has two meanings: "heart" and "to turn over." Thus, this is a play on words, and so the author is also saying, "I am beginning by flipping the beginning over." If you flip over the word "bada'" (beginning), you get "adab" (courtesy). Hence, the author says he begins with adab because courtesy is the highest and noblest of beginnings, and Muslims should have adab with Allah.

The word "adab" has many meanings in Arabic. A person who is erudite is called "adib," because, generally, with learning comes manners. Thus, the root meaning of the word "adab" is related to "courtesy." In addition, a mu'addib is a teacher of children, and the word literally means "the one who is causing somebody to have adab." An educator of children is someone who teaches the students how to behave properly, and proper behaviour is at the heart of this science. Thus, the shaykh emphasises the extreme importance of having proper adab with Allah and of behaving properly with Him before anyone else.

Shame and Humility

We show adab to Allah in two ways: one, by expressing haya and the other, by having dhul. The root-word of "haya" is related to life. "Hay" means "living," and "hayat" means "life" itself. According to a famous Hadith, "Every religion has a quality that is characteristic of that religion, and the characteristic of my religion is haya." Haya is important not only in Muslim culture but in many other cultures as well, such as the Filipino culture. "Hayah," meaning shame in Tagalog, is significant to the Christian Filipinos as well as for many other northern Filipinos. (This is from the Muslim influence because the Muslims had a strong and lasting influence on the Filipinos before the Spanish arrived there).

Although this is no longer the case, there was once a time when if you had grown up in this culture, you most probably would have heard the phrase "shame on you" as a child. In modern American culture however, "shame" has become a bad word. We are told that shaming a child is a bad thing to do because it will harm the child's self-esteem. Therefore, everything a child does is okay, and we must make him feel good about himself, no matter what he does. If he just slit his brother's throat, they say, "well, he has had a trying childhood, so we have to make allowances for him." This is an extreme this culture has reached.

Anthropologists have divided traditional cultures into shame and guilt cultures where guilt is an

inward mechanism, and shame is an outward mechanism. The word "guilt" comes from a German word that has to do with debt. When indebted, you feel an obligation to the person to whom you are indebted. The idea with guilt is that if you have done something wrong, there is an internal mechanism that caused you to feel guilty about your actions and thus you want to relieve that guilt by rectifying your wrongdoing.

Most primitive cultures are not guilt-based cultures but shame-based. For them, the reason why you refrain from doing something wrong is because you loathe being shamed by other people and do not desire others to say such things as, "How could you?", "How dare you!" or "Shame on you!" Furthermore, you do not want to bring shame upon your family, your tribe, and the like due to your own actions. While this culture has almost entirely lost and even dishonours this concept, Islam not only honors the idea of feeling shame for your wrong actions, it takes it to another level by instructing you to have shame before Allah and the unseen world. Thus, you recognise that even if people cannot see you, Allah and the angels always see you, so you have shame before Him and the angels. Hence, Muslims have a shame-based culture; however, that shame transcends the cultural sense of feeling shame towards one's elders or towards one's parents and takes it to another level which has an interior mechanism that is not akin to guilt.

"Haya" is having shame before Allah, and the author of this poem says that is part of having proper adab with Allah. Thus, if you want to have correct behaviour (adab) with Allah, then have a sense that Allah is always watching you so that you feel shameful to do something that is displeasing to Him. This is similar to the way most healthy people do not desire to act in a manner that displeases their parents because their parents are the means by which they came into existence. Their parents supported them; the mother cleaned the child when he was young and spent nights awake for him. By having this shame with his parents, the child honours them.

In addition to haya, Shaykh Muhammad Maulud says to have dhul. A dhalil person is someone who is lowly, abject, and humble. Although this is a negative quality when displayed towards others, it is a noble quality when shown toward Allah. The Quran mentions that people who incur the anger of Allah get dhul thrust upon them. The shaykh advises being dhalil before Allah alone. Al-dhalil is someone such as a slave who is afraid to do anything in the presence of his master; there is a type of humility before God contained in this idea.

Thus, according to the shaykh, a person with adab is one who possesses haya and dhul. Furthermore, he says that not only should you feel this haya and dhul, but you should also feel dejected out of shame before Allah. That is, you should feel you are munkasir, broken. You become broken in the presence of Allah when you recognise that you are bringing to Him

nothing but yourself and your wrong actions. When you seriously ponder upon all that Allah has given you and then reflect over what you have given to Him in return, you really feel this breaking (inkisar) out of shame; you become humbled before Allah in awe, and you realise you can only implore Him to change your state.

Taqwa

Give up your desires for His, emptied of desire for what His servants have, hastening to fulfill His commands, fearful of the subtle fault of bad manners.

The Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam is reported to have said "none of you truly believes until his desires are in accordance with the very thing that I brought." Muru'ah (virtuous merit) is what the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam brought, and that is what Allah subhanahu wa t'ala wants from us. Thus, the shaykh says that adab with Allah is to give up your designs for what Allah subhanahu wa t'ala desires for you to be emptied of desire, having no tam'a. Tam'a is greed, avarice, desire, wanting something out of situations, and having ulterior motives behind your actions. Al-tama'a is one who desires to know what he may gain out of all situations, asking himself, "what's in it for me?" According to the shaykh, we must rid ourselves of this attitude. We should desire nothing from the servants of Allah; rather, all of our desires should be sought from Allah subhanahu wa t'ala because He is the One who possesses everything.

Furthermore, the shaykh says that you should be quick to fulfill Allah's subhanahu wa t'ala commands and constantly be aware of the hidden fault of having bad adab with Him. The subtlety of bad adab is illustrated by the hadith, "A man amongst you will say a word giving it no consideration at all, and it will drag him 70 seasons in the hell fire." Thus, as this hadith demonstrates, if you do not learn the commands of Allah, you will not know when you are breaking them. For example, if you do not know what is a stop sign, you just pass right through it, unaware of having done something wrong. The problem is that accidents tend to occur when people, whether knowingly or unknowingly, do not follow the rules. Similarly, when we breach adab with Allah subhanahu wa t'ala, bad things happen: we bring harm upon ourselves, and this should be a serious fear of ours.

Once, a Mauritanian shaykh and I saw a mouse coming out of its hole, and we noticed that every time the mouse heard a sound, it would stop and shoot back into the hole. "That's taqwa," the shaykh explained. Taqwa is worrying about being eaten alive by your own mistakes. Having this kind of fear of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala ultimately turns into love, and that is the highest maqam

(spiritual station). We do not fear Allah subhanahu wa t'ala because we think Allah subhanahu wa t'ala is horrible—the contrary is true: Allah subhanahu wa t'ala is the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Forgiving. However, at the same time, we wish not to incur the wrath of Allah because Allah does have wrath. Similarly, our parents will sometimes do painful things to us out of love, and often, we are not aware of the reason.

Servitude to Allah

If you realise your attributes of servitude, you are assisted with the attributes of the Independent One. Realise your abjectness and impoverishment, and you will gain dignity and wealth from the All-Powerful subhanahu wa t'ala.

Shaykh Muhammad Maulud then explains that if you realise the qualities of haya (shame), dhul (humility), and faqar (poverty) in yourself and empty yourself of all of their opposites, such as shameless behaviour and arrogance, then you will gain dignity and wealth from Allah subhanahu wa t'ala. Thus, by realising your 'ubudia (servitude) to Allah, you truly gain freedom.

Freedom is gained because in completing your servitude to Allah, you are no longer a slave to yourself, and such a person is in actuality the only free human being. If you cannot control yourself, you are a slave to yourself. Someone may claim to be free, but when the food shows up, he cannot resist and stop himself. Such behaviour does not indicate freedom as far as Muslims are concerned. Another person may also claim freedom, but when an opportunity to have an illicit relation emerges, he cannot control himself, even if he is the president of the United States. One former president of the United States of America was a Rhodes scholar who went to Cambridge and received the highest level of education, yet he was a slave to the lowest aspects of himself. He is unable to control himself. Such a person is not free; he is 'abd al-hawa, a slave of his passions.

On the contrary, when such a situation arises for a person who is 'abd Allah, he has taqwa of Allah. Thus, even though the temptation might be there, as it is natural for human beings to have shahwa (desire), he can control it because he is not an 'abd (slave) to his desire; rather, he is a sayyid (master) of it. If one has desire for one's spouse, then the shahwa is mubah (permissible). However, if the desire is for someone with whom such a relationship would be illicit, then the 'abd Allah does not even consider it, and such a person is a truly free person. The same applies to any other shahwa because the 'abd Allah is not a slave to any of his desires. They serve him, and he does not serve them.

The stronger your taqwa is, the more control you have over your desires. According to Imam al-Ghazali, the stomach and the genitals are the two most dominant desires, and if you can control these two, then the other ones become easy. In addition, the desire of using the tongue is something that also causes people trouble. There are people who cannot stop backbiting no matter how much they are admonished to stop. I have seen this occur a great deal. In fact, I once pointed out to a person that he was saying something wrong, and in less than three or four minutes, he began to say the same thing and was not even aware of what he was doing. This inability to control the tongue is a major problem for most of us. We speak badly about others, complain, and say other things that we should not be saying. Learning to control the tongue is an important matter.

Another problem with human beings is that we perceive these qualities that the shaykh mentions, of being impoverished and being humble, as abject qualities. We do not wish to be poor, yet the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam chose poverty over wealth. He had no money or jewellery in his house; he slept on the ground on a "bed" made of leather and palm fibres; he had only two pillows in his room for his guests to sit upon. He lived in total poverty. In this culture, if people lived like that, they would most likely be in a state of total humiliation and degradation, being concerned about what other people think, not about what is best for them. On the contrary, the shaykh says that if you realise your true state of 'ubudia to Allah, you will have dignity with Allah; that is, you will be mu'azaz with Allah no matter what your living conditions are in this world.

In Surah Yasin, we are told about the two people who came to warn the town's people of Allah's punishment, yet the town's people threatened them in return. Then Allah says, "Azazna bithalithin: We gave them 'iza with a third". Allah subhanahu wa t'ala gives 'iza to whomever He wants. He says, "Ya'izu man yasha'u wa yudhilu man yasha'u. Tu'izu man tasha'u wa tadhilu man tasha'u: You give iza to whomever You want, and You humble whomever You want." Amazingly, there are people in the world today who are out on the streets begging while their ancestors were people who used to rule the world. Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala can do so to any people He wants.

A secret of creation is that if you realise the true attribute in yourself before Allah subhanahu wa t'ala, Allah subhanahu wa t'ala gives you its opposite. For example, if you realise humility before Allah, Allah will make you 'aziz before other people, giving you dignity because of your realisation of your true state of humility with Him. If you are arrogant with Allah subhanahu wa t'ala, He may let it go for a while, but when He takes you to account, He completely humbles you before everyone. This is a big secret that the shaykh gives us in this poem.

The Tongue: the Heart's Articulator

Indeed, there is no salvation like the heart's salvation as all the limbs respond to its desires.

Here, the shaykh reminds us that there is no salvation like the salvation of the heart because every limb answers to the heart. Thus, if your heart is saved, your limbs are saved whereas if your heart is not saved, your limbs are not saved. In relation to this, a hadith says, "the heart lies under the tongue" which means that the tongue is the interpreter of the heart as it tells you what is in the heart. A munafiq (hypocrite) is wretched for this very reason: he says with his tongue what is not in his heart. This is in opposition to the purpose of the creation of the tongue as the tongue was created to express what is in the heart. Thus, the hypocrite is in fact oppressing his tongue as well as his heart.

A hadith warns us that the tongue is what takes people to the hell fire. If the heart is rectified, then the tongue becomes sound as the tongue is the heart's articulator. For this reason, Allah subhanahu wa t'ala says, "Ya ayuhallathina amanuttaqu Allah wa qulu qawlan sadida. Yuslih lakum a'amalakum..." (33:70-71). Allah subhanahu wa t'ala tells you to be upright in the way you speak because when the tongue serves to translate what is in the heart, this is an indication that the heart is upright. Thus, if your tongue is upright, this means that your heart is upright. According to a hadith, all the limbs shake every morning when they wake up in the spiritual world and say to the tongue, "Itaqi Allah fina ini istakamta istakmina wa ini'wajajta i'wajajna: fear Allah with us because if you are straight, we are all straight, and if you go crooked, we are all crooked." Thus, the significance of the tongue is clear from this hadith, and therefore a good deal of spiritual work should be performed upon the tongue, such as practicing much dhikr (remembrance) of Allah. We should replace empty chatter with remembrance of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala, using the tongue for what it was created for, and not wasting time with it. The tongue is second in its importance only to the heart and is connected strongly to the heart.

Stages to Allah

After you have a firm grasp of this foundation, then a mastery of the heart's infirmities is the second stage.

According to the shaykh, the beginning foundation of this science is realising what adab is and that the whole point of existence in this world is to have adab with Allah and with His creation.

That is, you were created simply to have adab with Allah subhanahu wa t'ala and to have adab with the creation of Allah. According to a hadith, the Quran is called, "madabatu Allah: the place you learn adab with Allah subhanahu wa t'ala "because the Quran was revealed to teach us adab.

The shaykh says that after you have a firm grasp of this foundational understanding of adab, then a mastery of the heart's infirmities is the second stage. Your ultimate goal, the highest station, is to be with Allah subhanahu wa t'ala, and you cannot reach the higher maqamat (spiritual stations) without having mastered the primary stations. You want to raise yourself in degrees, and you cannot get to the level you wish to reach without going up the stages (darajat). Allah subhanahu wa t'ala says that He raises people in degrees. The first degree is recognising that you want adab, and then you have to recognise that what is preventing you from getting it is a diseased heart.

The Obligation of a Pure Heart

Knowledge of the heart's ailments, what causes all of them, and those things that remove them is an obligation incumbent upon every responsible individual.

Knowledge of the diseases of the heart, what causes them, and how to remove them is an obligation incumbent upon every human being: it is a binding obligation on every adult Muslim. According to the scholars of Islam, you must have some knowledge of the diseases in order to be able to free yourself from them. This ruling is based on the Quranic verse: "Qad aflaha man zakaha wa qad khaba man dasaha: the one who nurtures his soul is the one who has success, and the one who stunts its growth is destroyed" (91:9-10). Thus, the Quran is talking about tazkiya of the nafs. Allah also says, "Yawma la yanfa'u malun wa la banuna illa man ata Allaha bi qalban salim: on that day, neither wealth nor children will benefit, only the one who comes to Allah with a pure heart" (26:88-89). Thus, according to the Quran, the only people saved on the Day of Judgment are people with qulub salima (sound hearts). "Salim" (sound) is related to the word "aslama" because "Islam" is moving towards that state of soundness.

The Inherent Nature of Man: Good or Evil?

This is the ruling of Imam al-Ghazali. This ruling does not apply to one who was granted a sound heart according to scholars other than al-Ghazali.

Al-Ghazali reckoned the heart's illnesses inherently part of a human being. Other scholars deemed them predominant in man but not necessarily qualities inherent to his nature.

In agreement with Imam al-Ghazali's ruling, the shaykh states that purification of the heart is an obligation upon every individual. Imam al-Ghazali is really the master of this science, and this poem is an abridgement of al-Ghazali's fourth volume of the *Ihya*, the section on *munjiat wal muhlikat*. Not only is al-Ghazali radi Allahu 'anhu a master of this science, he is also the *mujadid* (reviver of Islam) of the fifth century according to the consensus of the 'ulama who came after him. Al-Ghazali considers knowledge of the diseases of the heart *fard 'ayn*, incumbent upon every individual Muslim, because he considers the diseases of the heart to be instinctual, something that is inherent to the human condition and part of the Adamic nature (*kharaiiz*). Some other scholars disagree: they maintain that while these diseases are predominant in man, nevertheless, there are some people who are born with a completely pure heart having none of the diseases, and therefore knowledge of this science is not obligatory upon those people.

For example, there are altruistic children who have no problem with sharing: they are not greedy about toys. Although this is not the norm, they do exist. Some hearts, for some reason and whatever secret, do not suffer from diseases of the heart, but most do. Children manifest diseases such as greed, avarice, and hatred. Little children will say, "I hate you." They have learned the concept of hate, and at that brief moment of uttering those words, hatred is what they feel. Thus, these diseases begin to show up even in children, and we believe that all children are born into *fitra* (a natural, inherent state). Hence, if these diseases are in fact inherent, do Muslims then believe in the Christian concept of original sin, that people are corrupt by nature?

The difference between the Muslims and Christians on this issue is that according to the Muslims, there is an inclination to these diseases that is instinctual. Muslims do not believe in any way that this inclination is a result of the wrong action of Adam 'alayhi salaam because we do not believe that Prophet Adam 'alayhis salaam did anything to bring the wrath of Allah upon himself; we do not believe that he fell from Grace. Such ideas are Christian. According to the Quran, Adam 'alayhis salaam is a prophet who made *tawbah* to Allah, and Allah accepted his *tawbah*, and therefore, he has no blemish. His offspring do not suffer because of anything he did.

What, then, do we mean by the fact that there is an instinctual inclination that manifests in the erring of human beings? This relates to the black area of the heart. The heart is a spiritual organ, and inside the heart, there is a black dot, a seed that has the potential of spreading like cancer and overwhelming the heart. For example, although most people are unaware of this, many people in the world have tuberculosis. They have a bacillus in their lungs, but it is dormant. If they were in

a situation where they began to get ill or starve and their immune system shut down, then the tuberculosis would emerge. Similarly, there is a dormant element in the human heart that, if nurtured, will destroy the human being. For this reason, a hadith says that if the son of Adam does something wrong, a black spot appears on his heart. If a person makes tawbah, the black spot gets erased, but if he does not, the black spot continues to grow until the whole heart becomes pitch black. This is when one loses his humanity. We often refer to this as hard-heartedness.

This idea of the heart's ability to become corrupt, lose its light, and turn black is found in many cultures. For example, a Hausa man in Africa once explained to me that Hausas refer to someone who has a really bad heart with a word which meant "black-hearted." Hausas are dark skinned people, and there is no racist connotation attached to this phrase. "Black" and "white" are used similarly in the Quran. Allah subhanahu wa t'ala says, "Their faces become bright, and their faces become black." This "white" does not refer to white skin but refers to light. There is a light, and the absence of that light is darkness. For this reason, a black person can have light in his face while a white person can have a completely dark face and visa-versa. We are speaking here about spiritual entities and not about skin colours.

Understand that complete obliteration of these diseases until there is no trace is simply not in the capacity of human beings.

While knowledge of the diseases and their removal is obligatory, keep in mind that to remove these diseases until nothing is left is not in the human capacity. The Quran says, "Wa man yuka shuha nafsihi fa ulayka humulmuflihin: the one who has protection from the evil of his soul is from the people of success." Allah subhanahu wa t'ala does not say "the one who removes that shuh (evil) or the one the shuh is removed from." Rather, Allah subhanahu wa t'ala says, "the one who is protected from it." This is similar to that bacillus sitting in the lungs: if you are protected from it, it never becomes tuberculosis; it only remains dormant.

According to a hadith, every child is born on fitra. Many Muslims think this hadith means that every child is born a Muslim. However, the hadith does not say that. The Quran refers to Islam as "din al-fitra," so Islam is fitra, and this means that we are naturally inclined to Islam. "Fitra" is the inherent nature that human beings incline towards naturally, and what the human being is naturally inclined to is goodness. When human beings are raised and nurtured correctly, they usually incline towards the truth. However, they also have the susceptibility to go astray.

Obviously, there are various factors that affect the fitra state; one of them is legitimacy. According to the sharia', there is no fault on the child, but there is an effect that illegitimacy has in the unseen realm, and this is confirmed by several hadiths. Thus, it is important for people to choose righteous mates before having children. If there were no reality to the parents, there would be no meaning to choosing righteous people as mates.

When choosing a husband, a woman should look for his taqwa, and when choosing a wife, a man should look for her deen. One of the salaf said, "Don't marry your daughter except to a taqy (a man of taqwa) because if he loves her, he will show her ihsan (goodness), and if he doesn't like her, he will not oppress her." When marrying, you should think of future generations and want your children to be raised properly. The parents are important, and the effects they have on a child are extraordinary, so you want parents who have taqwa and deen.

Be as it may, here I am giving you what you need to know of their definitions, their aetiology, and their cures.

The shaykh says he is going to give us the definitions of the diseases of the heart from their root, explaining how the diseases are caused and how to cure them. He begins with bukhl, not because it is the worst disease but because he is going in alphabetical order.

The Diseases and their Cures

Miserliness (bukhl)

To begin with, the refusal to give what is necessary either by sacred law or by virtuous merit is the essence of miserliness that is mentioned (among the diseases of the heart).

A bakhil is a miser. Bukhlun is miserliness. According to the shaykh, the refusal to give what is necessary either by sacred law or by virtuous merit is at the essence of miserliness. Thus, there are two aspects to bukhl, one that relates to the sacred law (shari'a) and the other to muru'ah (virtuous merit). Muru'ah is an important concept in Arabic, and it comes from the word for "man." Its meaning has connotations of chivalry, manhood, and virtue.

As for the necessities of sacred law, they are such things as zakat, support of one's dependents, and similar rights due to others, such as relieving one in distress.

An example of the first aspect of bukhl that is related to shari'a is failure to give zakat. If you are not giving zakat, you are bakhil by shari'ah, and that bukhl is haram (forbidden). The same is true for a man who is not giving support (nafaqat) for his wife and children because men are maintainers and caretakers of women and children. If a man gets divorced, he must pay child support because that is a shari'ah right of the mother of his children. Similarly, the shari'ah demands that you fulfill the rights of other people and spend on others where the need exists if you have been given the capacity to do so. Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala says, "In their wealth there's a haq (right) to the beggar and to the one who doesn't have money and so his needs are not taken care of." The miser is the one who does not take care of people even though he is able to do so. These examples are related to shari'ah.

Examples of meritorious character are not giving people a hard time over some paltry matter or abandoning nitpicking over trivialities.

Avoiding such things is even more important for a neighbour, a relative, or a wealthy person or when hosting guests or concerning something in which such behaviour is simply inappropriate, such as purchasing a shroud. The same is true for one buying a sacrificial animal or purchasing something one wants to donate to the needy.

Not being bakhil by standards of muru'ah (virtuous merit) has to do with not constricting people or making matters difficult for them. The shaykh's example of this is not giving people a hard time over some paltry, insignificant, trivial matter. For instance, if someone owes you ten dollars, and you give him a hard time over it even though you have plenty of money and have no need for it, then you are considered bakhil by the standards of muru'ah, not by shari'ah. You have a right to that money by shari'a, but by muru'ah, such an attitude is despicable. The shaykh points out that refraining from such an attitude is even more important when dealing with a neighbour or a relative.

Furthermore, it is even worse to lack virtuous merit if you are wealthy because a wealthy person should have a type of magnanimity, a generosity that allows one to say, "don't worry about it" to others. According to a hadith, there was a wealthy man who had no good actions to his record except that he used to say to his servant when he went to collect money, "If they don't have it, tell them they don't have to worry about it." On the Day of Judgment, Allah subhanahu wa t'ala says to the angels, "this man was forgiving of people's transgressions against him, and I am more worthy of forgiving transgressions." Thus, Allah subhanahu wa t'ala says, "if he is going to

forgive people for the debts that were owed to him, then I'll forgive him for the debts he owes Me." Having this kind of muru'ah is not insignificant: wealthy people are encouraged to let go of debts they really do not need paid off. If the wealthy see the indebted are having a hard time, they should just say "Bismillah. Don't worry about it;" such an attitude is encouraged by the shari'a also.

Similarly, if you are hosting a guest, and your guest spills something on the carpet, you should not say, "Can't you watch yourself a little bit? That's a brand new carpet I have;" saying such a thing is not showing muru'ah. On the contrary, you should try to keep them from feeling bad, saying such things as, "Don't worry about it. I love tea on my carpet. In fact, I heard a proverb that says, "The best thing for a carpet is spilt tea." Obviously, this proverb makes the guest feel good when he spills tea. The point is that you do not show more concern for your carpet than for your guest.

The shaykh also gives the example of buying a funeral shroud. Haggling over the price is inappropriate because the funeral shroud should remind you of death, and you should put things into perspective, forgetting about the ephemeral world. The same advice applies to buying a sacrificial animal. Since you are sacrificing an animal for Allah, you should want to get a good animal and not say, "No, no; that's too much." In addition, when purchasing something you wish to donate to needy people, you should desire to get something that is good and not cheap or else bukhl is exhibited in that act. Similarly, trying to get a bargain for something you are going to give as sadaqah for the sake of Allah is bukhl.

E.J. Cullen wrote a brilliant short story about a rummage sale for the church, "How Some People Feel about Jesus." In it, Cullen pointed out that people cared so much about the church that they were going to sell their worst junk to support it with their rummage sales. Muslims may learn from this important idea: it is shocking that some Muslim mosques are also having these rummage sales. You should give the masjid the best things you have, not the worst things or the garbage you wish to get rid of.

Thus, one who makes matters difficult for one whose rights make it clearly inappropriate to do so has indeed torn away the veils of dignity. This is as the majestic and wise guides have stated.

The same goes for one who fulfills his obligations without good cheer or spending from the least of what he possesses.

If you owe someone, such as your neighbour, a right and go to fulfill that right to him but are an unpleasant with him in doing so, then that is inappropriate. Furthermore, the shaykh says that by being unpleasant, you have torn away the veils of your dignity and of your muru'ah, and this is according to the "majestic and wise guides" who are the 'ulama. Thus, someone who fulfills his obligations without good cheer falls into this category, such as a man who frowningly or proudly says, "Here's your zakat" to the receiver. The proper way to give zakat is to actually put your hand down, allowing the recipients to take it with their hands above yours. You should give it to them with a smiling face feeling honored to pay your zakat. Indeed, the recipients of your zakat truly are honouring you by helping you to fulfill the haq of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala.

Thus, by the standards of both shari'ah as well as muru'ah, bukhl is considered low in Islam as karam (generosity) is one of the highest qualities of our Messenger sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam. In fact, it could be said that his karam follows immediately after his rahmah (mercy). "Inna akramakum 'inda Allah atqakum: indeed, the most karim of you in the sight of Allah is he who has the most taqwa" (49:13). The Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam was the most atqa (person with taqwa) of us, so he was the most generous, the noblest. "Karim" means generous and noble, so the Arabs view generosity as nobility. Allah is al-Karim, the Generous. Therefore, it is important to recognise that doing just what the shari'a states is not enough: you should go above and beyond that by showing generosity to Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala.

Its root is love of this world for its own sake or just so the self can acquire some of its fleeting pleasures. The origin of this disease is love of dunya (this ephemeral world). You are bakhil because you love the stuff with which you are bakhil. If you did not love it, then giving it up would be easy: you would just say "bismillah" and give it up. However, when you love something, you want to hold on to it. In Mexican culture, they say kudah, meaning he has no hand to give out; he got cut off at the elbow; he is cheap. Similarly, another word for bakhil is mumsik. "Mumsik" means "constipated"; the idea is that the mumsik is unable to let go of what is actually of beneficial to let go. Thus, if you do not give out from your wealth, it will poison and kill you. You must let it go. For this reason, imsak is miserliness.

Furthermore, the root word for pure gold ('ikyan) is 'iky which is the meconium stool of an infant. Thus, gold is related to feces. In a hadith in the musnad of Imam Ahmad, the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam said, "Allah has made what comes out of the son of Adam a metaphor for the dunya." Ultimately, the dunya is like that: it is beautiful while it lasts, but in the end, it is what it is.

The height of dunya is gold, and the desire to hold on to it is like someone who cannot let go of his waste matter. Zakat is considered the waste matter of your wealth; it purifies your wealth. For this reason, bani Hashim, the family of the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam cannot take zakat. It is the filth of your wealth because everyone who earns money will always have doubtful (shubahat) or prohibited matters (muharramat) in their wealth acquisition: there are always doubtful matters concerning financial transactions, and by giving zakat, you are purifying your wealth. Similarly, when you eat food, there is benefit and harm in your food. Hopefully, the body absorbs the benefit and removes the harm. The Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam said a du'ah after coming out of the bathroom: "Praise be to the One who has provided me with its delight (the taste of the food) and retained in me its benefit (its strength, the energy derived from food) and removed from me its harm." The idea here is much like the idea behind zakat: with it, Allah allows you to remove what is harmful from your wealth. When the bakhil holds on to his wealth, it harms him in the end.

According to Imam Ali, the worst person is the bakhil because in dunya, he is mahrum (deprived), and in akhirah, he is mu'adhab (punished). In dunya, he does not even benefit from his wealth. There are several hidden millionaires in America who live middle class lives and have millions of dollars in the bank. These millionaires do not want to spend their money because they want to save it. Such is the nature of a bakhil: he does not benefit from his wealth in the dunya, and then, in the akhirah, he is punished for hoarding it. Once, the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam asked who was the sayyid of a certain tribe. The tribe's people replied, Jad ibn Qays "illa nastbakhilahu: except he's a little bit of a miser" to which the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam replied, "he cannot be your sayyid" because the sayyid cannot be a miser. He then asked rhetorically, "Is there any disease you know that is worse than miserliness?" The point is that one cannot be a sayyid and a bakhil at the same time.

Hence, the origin of this disease is either love of dunya for its own sake, simply because it is dunya, or because the self wants some benefit from the dunya. However, ibn Hazam would probably say that one of the benefits that the self is trying to secure by hoarding wealth is to alleviate the fear of poverty. The fact that the bakhil has millions in the bank makes him feel good even though he is not benefiting from it. This feeling is assuaging his hala' (anxiety). The amazing thing is that such people never feel good because they are always worried about such things as the stock index, NASDAQ. They pace up and down when the prices are falling, exclaiming, "Oh look at that! What's going to happen? I am only worth six billion now; I was worth 12 billion." There is such a man, and he is 70 years old; even if he set out to spend one million dollars every day for the rest of his life, he would be unable to finish the amount of money he has. Bukhl is a deep disease; ultimately, it is a type of worshiping of money. How wretched is the servant of the dinar and the dirham, "trusting in the almighty dollar," as they say.

One day, when the stock market crashes, it is gone; and it may be sooner than when we think.

The Cure to Bukhl

Treat it by realising that those who indeed have achieved it (dunya) did so only by exhausting themselves over long periods of time. By doing so, they finally did accumulate the very things they were seeking.

Bukhl's cure is realising that those who achieved dunya did so by exhausting themselves over a long period of time. Thus, ask yourself how bad you want dunya. If you want it really bad, you have to work for it, and working for it means working day and night while life passes you by. Many people spend a tremendous amount of time at work; they never have time for their families because of dunya. They possess that "I have to keep working and making more and more" mentality. It becomes an obsession. Actual life passes them by, and the experiences of life are lost. People are obsessively searching for wealth and security, and in the end, their lives are over. The shaykh is telling us to look at those people and how they exhausted themselves chasing after the dunya.

Meanwhile, just as they are approaching the heights of its splendour, suddenly, without their permission, death assails them.

Just as they are beginning to get everything they want, suddenly, without their permission, death assails them. Dodi and Diana are good examples of that. People in England were devastated by Diana's death. They thought, "No, no! She can't die." Her life was the life people wanted: fame, beauty, lineage, and wealth. She "had it all" as the saying goes. She was right at the prime of her life, only 38 years old. Death is not invited in; it comes without invitation. It simply arrives when it is time to go, and it takes the person. All those wealthy people have to die too.

(Treat it also by recognising) the disdain shown to misers and the hatred people have for them even amongst themselves.

Nobody likes a miser. Even misers do not like each other. With the same treatment, treat the one whose heart's ailment is love of wealth. The disease of hub al dunya (love of the ephemeral world) is treated as you treat bukhl. The two diseases are related as we have already seen.

Diseases: Batar (wantonness)

Batar is wantonness or excessive mirth, too much exuberance. Inability to bear the blessings of this world (reckless extravagance). "How many cities have we destroyed they were so happy with their livelihood now look at their empty places?". Every child in America is born approximately \$40,000 in debt because of the prior generations living beyond their means.

Treatment

Treat it with hunger and thoughts of death and al-akhirah. In traditional medicine related to spiritual cosmology too much food killed the spiritual heart. Which is seen in the physical heart too. Too much food causes the physical heart to literally harden (the heart is a metaphor for the spiritual world).

Abu Madyan Shuaib, one of the great spiritual masters of North Africa known for Tassawuf-stressed on the importance of fasting. The best fast is the 3 days of the month (13,14,15) According to the Maliki madhab. $3 * 12 = 36 * 10$ (hasanat) = 360...It is the equivalent of fasting everyday. There was a Sahaba that approached the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam and asked him to advise him on fasting. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) told him to fast Yaumul Bayadh (3 middle days of the lunar month), the Sahaba said he could do more, so the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) told him to fast every Monday and Thursday, the Sahaba said he could do more, so the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) told him to fast the fast of Dawud (every other day) and do no more than that. The Sahaba fasted the fast of Dawud and when he got old, he said he wished that he followed the initial advice of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) (ie. to fast only 3 days of the month). This hadith illustrates a couple of things, one that when the Sahaba decided to take on an act, they did it consistently. Also, that we should try to do less, and keep increasing it as our strength permits.

Doing dhikr of the states of akhira is important.

Diseases: Bughud (Hatred)

Hatred for other than the sake of Allah. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) didn't hate things for their essence but he hated the manifestation of their actions. Incompatibility with someone is normal but that doesn't mean we should hate them. There was once a hadith where the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was sitting with his companions and he told them, "Shall I point to you one of the people of the Station of Paradise?" and they said "yes", so he

pointed to a man that was walking by. One of the Sahabas decided to befriend the man, and asked him if it was okay if he followed him around. The man agreed. The Sahaba noticed that the man was just an average Muslim. He didn't do anything out of the ordinary, didn't pray at night, or fast as much...So he wondered what his secret was. When he finally asked the man, the man replied "I can't think of anything, but at night I do not go to sleep with rancor in my heart against any other Muslim". The Sahaba immediately knew that that was his secret. (This and other hadiths are roughly paraphrased).

Cure

Pray for the one you don't like. Make dua specifically for them, and for Allah to remove the rancour in your heart.

Disease: Al Baghyu (Harming creation when there is no just cause)

This is a deep and wretched disease.. Baghi is a root word for prostitution in arabic. Bagha means to desire. The root of oppression is desire. According to Buddhists the fundamental disease is desire. "Your oppression is against your own selves" (10:23). Root of it, is love of position. We should contemplate on how many an amir dies and when he is buried he is the same as everyone else around him? Know that this desire is an inclination toward the servants of Allah, taking you away from Him.

You will be worn out trying to kiss up to people, and you will still have enemies. People are selfish in nature. The concern with other's affection leads to hypocrisy, riyaa, manipulation, not only that, don't expect the pleasure of Allah, if you are seeking the pleasure of others. Honour people according to their level of knowledge and taqwa.

Cure

The one whose heart is encrusted with the love of this dunya his treatment is certainty. Thus place death in front of your eyes to cleanse the heart. Once Aisha (radhiallaahu anha) was asked what was the most wonderous thing about the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam)? She said "Everything about him was wonderous!" She continued "When the night came and everyone

went to be with their lover, he went to be with Allah subhanahu wa t'ala (his beloved)". Death is close and dunya is nothing compared to the akhirah. Death could be the next breath, step, etc.

Keep death close to you and you will be living in the present, not regretting over the past or hoping for the future. Everyone is dead except the one who lives in the present moment. The dunya is a bridge so pass over it, and don't build on it. We should love things that are means to bring us to Allah, which is Wajib, then there is a love which is Mubah (unblameworthy) such as love for your children, wives, etc, there is love that is Makruh and love that is Haram. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) reminded us not to curse the world because Allah subhanahu wa t'ala created it and it is a means to reach Allah. Alam is the world, dunya is the ephermal aspect of the world. Alam-Aalamah- is the greatest sign of Allah. Anything that is obtained by necessity of life on earth is not considered dunya, even the first wife is not considered dunya (and others if married for reasons of protection, orphanage etc). Someone who earns wealth for Tafakhur/arrogance/show off is despicable.

Disease: Madah (love of praise)

Love of praise for other than what Allah has praised them for. It is okay to be praised for what you have done, but don't even desire it except from Allah. Madah that's haraam is flattery. That's why the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "throw dust at the face of Flatterers". Telling someone genuinely that you have done something well, and them accepting it is not blameworthy.

Tamaa is the reason people praise others, and like to be praised for what they didn't do.

A good example of this is in situations of higher education, where you have Professors getting praised for work solely done by their graduate students, or in Corporations where the manager gets the praise for the team work, or governments, etc.

Hasad (Envy)

Hasad is a serious disease. There is a difference of opinion on whether it is a root disease or a disease- As the source of it is still desire/Tama. Hasad was the first manifestation of wrong in the heavens. Nothing prevented Iblis from bowing down except hasad or Tazzuz and Takabbur. Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "Hasad eats good deeds like fire eats dry wood".

Mahsud is he object of envy. Hasid is the envier. "Wahisidin Idha Hasad"- Hasid is the Shaytan, and to have envy is to manifest one of the attributes of the Shaytan. Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) "Every possessor of a blessing is envied". It doesn't matter at what level it is happening but it happens on all fronts of society. The one who envies is harmed faster than the one who is envied. The evil eye is related to hasad but not necessarily as some people may just have psychic powers that can affect others negatively.

Every culture has a concept of the evil eye, it is a universal concept, though now looked upon as superstitious by many westerners. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) "The evil eye is true". This is from a man who worked hard to dispel superstitions. When his son died, there was an eclipse of the moon. To the Arabs at that time the moon eclipses at the death of a great man, and soon people were claiming that. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "The moon is a sign of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala and the Sun is a sign of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala and none of them eclipse for anyone".

Hasad is manifested in ones desire for the loss of someone else's blessing. eg. hoping that someone loses a job, her husband, etc. Na'ima which comes from an Arabic word Na'ima (Softness or that which makes things easier). If Allah subhanahu wa t'ala gives someone a blessing, and you envy that then you are judging Allah's wisdom in bestowing that blessing to someone.

There was a story of a Sahaba called Al asmai, who used to wander to different camps/tents to collect wisdom. One day he went to a bedouin camp, and both the husband and wife were there (as was the norm) to entertain him. The husband was an incredibly ugly man, and the wife a gorgeous woman. When the husband left to slaughter a sheep, Al asmai turned to the wife and couldn't help but say "How could someone as beautiful as you end up with such an ugly man?" The woman told him, "Fear Allah ya Al-asmai. You never know, maybe my husband did something good and I am his blessing or I did something bad and he is my punishment!" Al-Asmai learned never to question Allah's na'imah.

The difference between Adam and Iblis is that Adam repented. The Hasud/Iblis did not feel the need to repent because he felt he was better. There is a hadith that states "A mu'min is not safe from 3 things, and one of them is hasad".

Cure

If you have envy as long as you don't harm the individual even when you are in a position to do so, then it is not bad hasad if your taqwa prevents you from harming that person. Imam Ghazali said that if you despise that part of yourself that causes you to envy then it is a sign that you aren't an envious person. There is the nafs and Ruh and there aren't much different from each other. The nafs is the ruh that is still tarnished by being in this world, we have to recognise this within ourselves. If you detest this lower self then it is a sign that the Ruh is a stronger force within you. It is dawa/medicine is not to follow your caprice, hawaa, desires. Hawaa means to fall or wind.

The nature of hawaa/passion is like a wind, it comes stirs things up, and then dies down. If you follow this then you are following whims. Truth is firm, and falsehood transient. Hawiya is the name of Jahannam and it is hawaa that takes you there. To do the opposite of what your hawaa dictates. e.g if your hawaa wants to harm the person then give the person a gift, praise the person when the inclination is to say something bad about him.

If the person is good, then his heart will be inclined towards you and inshaAllah this will change your heart too. Know that hasad harms the hasid in this world, because you will always be anxious and mad "Why did he get that promotion?". You become obsessed with the object of your envy. There is an Aab saying "Al Hasud la Yasud" -the one who envies can't get into a leadership position. We as Modern day Muslims are filled with envy for the Kuffar in the west because the bottom line is that they have dunya and we don't. Or people from other countries who always diss the Gulf Arab for their riches and how they are wasting it, but if they were in that situation they would probably do the same thing. We have to question our anger, is it from hasad? Or is it really being stimulated by an altruistic desire?

Communism is another example of pure Hasad. Marx's writing is filled with resentment. "Getting what belongs to us from the rich people". From a shariah perspective both the rich and poor have an obligation, the rich not to undermine or belittle the poor, and the poor not to envy or want to overthrow the rich.

In the U.S. over 90% wealth is in the hands of 3% of the population. Even Bill Gates is only worth 30% of someone like Rockefeller. The inheritance laws in Islam are designed to break monopolies. In traditional cultures the first son gets everything. Even in English cultures a woman with no protector may end up being thrown out of her house.

In Islam a woman gets part of the inheritance as well as it is spread amongst the rest of the family. Traditionally in Islam there is a strong middle class, which is a balancing force for the society. If a society is made up of a huge gulf between the rich and poor, it becomes a breeding ground for resentment, and revolutions to occur. Beware of self righteous indignation because it may fall into the realm of hasad.

A lot of communists suddenly became Islamists and Islam became a vehicle for the anger that is not rooted for the sake of Allah but rooted in not being satisfied with their worldly position. When you envy it doesn't benefit you or make the person lose the blessing, because ultimately Allah subhanahu wa t'ala gives and takes from who He will.

Causes

Enmity: A good example of this is the anti American feeling around the world, yet people are obsessed with the American culture.

Tahabbub: A type of hasad where two or more people have the same object of desire. eg. siblings fighting for parental love, or the disease of the second wife (that's why Shariah is adamant on being fair to the wives). Dharr- is a term referring to a second wife and it also means harm.

Takkabur: Arrogance is the root of this envy. Some Arabs such as Al Waleed ibn Mughairah and Abu Jahl were against the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) because he was "yateem Banu Hashim", an orphan, didn't have status, doesn't "deserve" this blessing. Pharaoh had this same disease when it came to Musa (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) also Iblis.

Tawazzuz: Not wanting to disturb the status quo. As long as we have the same thing, then it iokay. But once you move forward then I will re attempt to re establish the equilibrium, because feeling of self worth is threatened. Arabs couldn't believe the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was chosen by Allah subhanahu wa t'ala "but he is a man just like us?", "may be if he were a king, or angel"...etc.

Ta'ajjub: Rooted in disbelief. "I can't believe this is happening to them"

Hubbul Riyasa: Love of position/leadership, wanting to maintain authority. If someone gets a blessing then that threatens the authority of the hasud.

Shuh (Covetousness)

Because these diseases are part of our nature, the purpose is to then transform them so that they can be beneficial to us. Getting your disability to become advantageous to you. In Native American cultures they used to name their children names with disabilities such as lame deer, etc this is because they noticed that animals with disabilities overcompensated for their disadvantage.

The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: "There is no envy except in two cases: one who uses his wealth for the sake of Allah, and one given wisdom and he teaches it to others". Ghibta is good envy, when you envy a person based on higher things (not dunya things), so that you can be like them. You do not wish that they lose their blessings. It is okay to have hasad for a Kaffir or bad Muslim because they are using their blessings for bad things.

Blameworthy Modesty: although modesty is part of faith, it can become blameworthy. e.g when modesty prevents you from stopping a wrong from happening. In order for something to become a Munkar though it has to be agreed upon by all scholars to be wrong (you can't make a munkar on something where there is a difference of opinion on it).

When modesty prevents you from asking questions concerning the deen. Aisha (radhiallaahu anha) praised the Ansari women because modesty didn't prevent them from asking questions.

As for hayaa of generosity it is not blameworthy. The example is when the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) married Zainab (radhiallaahu anha), he invited people over for the waleema and all the guests left except 3. They were enjoying the company and didn't leave, even though it was the Prophet's (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam), first wedding night! The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam), didn't say anything. After a while, he left the room, then came back (to give them a hint), and they still didn't leave. He then left the room and came back again. An Ayah was then revealed to leave the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) when business was done. This is not blameworthy hayaa, because it was out of the Prophet's (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) karam

that he didn't kick them out. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "If modesty had been a man, it would have been a righteous man".

Al Khawdh

The heart's engagement with things that don't concern it.

Khawdh is the heart's reflection with things that are prohibited (Takhayyur when you think about sensory things). e.g reflecting on the beauty of those that are non-Mahram, or reflecting on the weaknesses and faults of Muslims whether they are present or absent. Toobah is a tree in Jannah that is for people who focus on their own faults and not others. Another example of blameworthy thoughts is reflecting on Allah's essence, it is s haraam.

Fear of Poverty

The origin of fear of poverty is a bad opinion of Allah. The shaytaan promises us poverty/faqar. Allah promised to provide for us *if* we have Taqwa.

There was a Jewish man who used to sell oil, he was poor, covered in oil etc. One day this famous wealthy Aalim, passed by, riding on a white horse. The Jewish man walked up to him and asked "Did you relate that this dunya is a paradise for a non believer and a prison for the believer?" The alim said "yes". The Jewish man then asked "Tell me what kind of paradise am I in? And what kind of prison are you in!" The Aalim paused for a second looked up, then down, then responded "When I contemplate upon what is prepared for you in the hereafter because of your disbelief, I can only assume you are in paradise! When I reflect upon what is prepared for me in form of the delights of Akhirah I can only conclude that I am in prison!". The Jewish man immediately took the Shahada!

The point is poverty is relative and the fear of it is a foolish thing. If you are in poverty, you won't have anything to fear...you are already impoverished. If you have wealth and are afraid of poverty, then what's the point of being wealthy! Most of the people that are afraid of poverty, have no clue what real poverty is about! Mark Twain once said "Most of my problems I never actually saw". It is all in the head. "Anxiety is half of growing old" The Prophet (sallallahu

‘alayhi wa sallam) said. He also said "Righteousness will lengthen your life". The interpretation is that people who are righteous don't have anxiety. The non believers are consumed with restlessness and anxiety that ages them quicker. Allah is the Razzaq, the perpetual provider.

Allah's dominion is never diminished by His giving/bestowing. "Contentment is a treasure that's never exhausted" The Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said. Know that Rizq that is allotted to you will reach you. Your rizq which was allotted to you in your mother's womb, is that which you will use. If you die and there is a million dollars you left behind, that money is not your rizq, it's the rizq of your heirs. There is a book written "How to live wealthy and die broke"- Such a selfish concept!!!

Mudahana (using religion to benefit your dunya)

One who uses his religion to benefit his dunya is a psychopathic hypocrite. Imam Ibn Khaldun "We try to saw our dunya by ripping our deen apart. So our deen does not remain and our dunya is never rectified". We lose both e.g when you are afraid to make inkaar because it's your job and you are afraid to lose it. Duhun is covering up/oil using in cosmetics. Mudahanna is sitting with people of disobedience, praising their actions, etc in order to gain some worldly favour. Mudarrat - this concept is different from Mudahana. This is when we are nice to someone but not at the sake of our deen, in order to get some worldly benefit. An example is using your worldly position to help others. This is not blameworthy. It is a rukhsa to do worldly things.

Origin

The root cause is desire/tamaa, and doing worship to impress others (riyaa). Riyaa is lesser polytheism. "The thing that I fear most for my ummah is riyaa". The Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said: If it is something like showing off your worldly skills such as archery, then this is blameworthy by virtue but not Shariah.

There are three characteristics of riyaa:

a) Laziness and lack of actions when you are not around people.

b) When people are around you increase your worship and energy for worship. There is definitely an element of increase in energy when you are around righteous people, which is why we are told to have good company. It only becomes riyaa when you do it for the sole purpose of impressing others.

c) Increasing actions when one is praised and decreasing them when not being praised. The example of a person who was praying, and people were talking about how MashaAllah he is always praying etc. The person in the middle of his prayer goes "What about my fasting?"

It is not bad to encourage others to do good, because the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) did it.

Cure

It is to remove from the heart 4 things:

1. Love of praise from other than Allah.
2. Fear of blame from other than Allah.
3. Desire of worldly benefit from people
4. Fear of harm from people.

Have yaqeen/certainty that no harm and no benefit can come to you except from Allah. Don't be deluded by praise/blame from others as it is all related to your worldly position. When you have nothing it is difficult to have friends. But when you start gaining status or wealth then all of a sudden you have many friends. In traditional Muslim world people used to vie for knowledge as this was what people were respected for, not wealth, sadly this is not the case anymore.

Hellen Keller's autobiography is very powerful. She was deaf, dumb and blind and this is a story of the awakening of her consciousness. She wasn't born that way, but became blind as a result of scarlet fever when she was less than two years old. She said the fact that she can remember what a tree looks like, though she saw it when she was a baby pretty much, is enough for her. She said that there is no slave in this world that didn't have a king in his ancestry and no king in this world that didn't have a slave in his ancestry.

The point is nothing is permanent in this dunya. The history of Al Mansur, a minister in Andalusia is fascinating. He was a mediocre student who was very ambitious. He enamored himself to the Khalifa to be's mother, and she put him in various positions. There was one powerful minister who was feared and wealthy and Al Mansur managed to put him in jail. The Minister with all his worldly position and wealth ended up dying a pauper in prison! If a person believes in certainty then riyaa doesn't occur in his heart.

The worst is that which is done to display virtue so one is entrusted with an endowment eg. an orphan's wealth so that he can misuse it. In Morroco there are those who do dhikr and praises of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) for money. It's pretty sad.

Scholars are of two opinions concerning riyaa. e.g If you recite Suratul Waqiah for the sole reason of not being afflicted by poverty (this is according to the Prophet's (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) hadith that if your read Suratul Waqiah everyday you will not be afflicted by poverty). Another example is to worship just for the sake of akhirah. Some say this is permissible since Allah encourages us to strive for Jannah by doing good deeds. The people of Tassawuf on the other hand, are extremely down on this. They say that we should worship for the sole purpose of pleasing Allah subhanahu wa t'ala and not for the reward. Rabiah said "Go after the Gardener not the garden!". She also said "Oh Allah, if I worship you for the fear of hell fire, then throw me into hell. If I worship you for the desire of Jannah then lock the gates of paradise from me." That is a bit of an extreme position but it depends on your station/maqam.

Ghazali said there are three types of worship:

1. The worship of a free man: Worships Allah subhanahu wa t'ala for the sake of His pleasure.
2. The worship of a merchant: Worship Allah subhanahu wa t'ala for the sake of Jannah (if I do this many hasanaat I will get this much) "What's in it for me syndrome".
3. Worship of a slave: Worship Allah subhanahu wa t'ala for the fear of Jahannam.

Allah subhanahu wa t'ala is encouraging us to do both Maghfirah and strive for Jannah. He uses both Takhwif (fear of hell) and Targhib (desire for Jannah) as a means of encouragement.

Some also warn against the pleasure of Ibadah. Ibadah becomes more pleasurable with constancy

and sincerity, more pleasurable than even entertainment. But again this is a bit of an extreme position, since Allah subhanahu wa t'ala gives us the sweetness of Ibadah as a means of encouragement and reward too. The one who likes people to see him do Ibadah, even though he is doing it for Allah subhanahu wa t'ala, some scholars say this is riyaa and some say it is okay. But if praise is the reason you are doing it then it is definitely riyaa. There is a difference of opinion). One of the Ulama said-whoever likes to do something and be praised for it and remembered by it, is committing shirk.

You can have riyaa even when no one is around eg you are reading a book and you find an interesting fact, so you write it down and memorise it, with the intent of impressing others with your knowledge. If the intent is to benefit people, then it is not riyaa. Sahl bin Abdullah, a scholar, said the one who desires the people to know what is in between him and His Lord then he is in a state of heedlessness, unless he is doing it as a reminder/Naseeha for others.

Ibn Masud and Ibn Umar used to go to the Masjid to pray Tahajjud as a means of reminding the Tabieen. Imam Malik was called An Najm (the star), did not consider it harmful as long as the original intent is sincere. Not to do something good out of fear of riyaa is riyaa too! Because the reason you are not doing it, is the people too, not Allah. If it is a worship you can hide, then it is better to hide it. It is better to do dhikr with the tongue, even when the heart is heedless, then not to do it at all. The dhikr of the tongue may reach the heart. Riyaa is seeing the people, not the people seeing you! If Ibadah is done for the sake of Allah then everyone else becomes insignificant. Fear of other than Allah and desire for it, is being devoid of tawakkul (reliance) because you don't have yaqeen (certainty), that everything good and bad is from Allah subhanahu wa t'ala. Tie your camel then rely on Allah subhanahu wa t'ala, don't be stupid either. Don't desire or fear creation.

Sakhatul Qadar is displeasure with the divine decree, when one resists Allah subhanahu wa t'ala and what He has decreed eg "I don't deserve this!", "Why is this happening to me?", "What did I do to deserve this suffering?" Imam Abul Hassan- A quality that destroys Hasanat is displeasure with the divine decree. "They were displeased with the divine decree and Allah subhanahu wa t'ala destroyed their deeds". With believers everything is good. People of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala recognise the dunya is a place of purification. There are only 4 possible states a human being can be in, and each state requires a response from Allah subhanahu wa t'ala:

1. Na'ma: State of blessing from Allah subhanahu wa t'ala. The required response is

shukur/gratitude to Allah subhanahu wa t'ala. Using the blessing in a manner that is pleasing to Allah subhanahu wa t'ala. We need to have shukur on the tongue, by thanking Allah subhanahu wa t'ala and the people. Feel the blessing and show it. Act in a way that is pleasing to Allah.

2. Baliya: State of Tribulation from Allah subhanahu wa t'ala. Response is Sabar/patience. Sabrun Jameel is not to complain, although we are allowed to complain (we will explain later).

3. Ta'aa: State of Obedience to Allah subhanahu wa t'ala. The response is not to become arrogant. It is because this is another form of blessing, and it is only from the Tawfiq of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala that you are in a state of obedience. The inherent danger of religion is self righteousness. Kibr is from shaytaan. Isa Ibn Maryam (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "There are two kinds of people, those who are in tribulation and others in blessing, we need to look at those in tribulation with compassion".

4. Ma'asiya: State of disobedience to Allah subhanahu wa t'ala. The response is repentance.

All these states are a way to get closer to Allah subhanahu wa t'ala, so they are all a blessing in the end. If you get a tribulation, then thank Allah it is not worse than it could be. Look at the Prophet's (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) life and the tribulations he faced! He buried 5 of his 6 children, his closest people died, people called him majnun, spit on him, held sanctions against him, drove him out of his home, etc and never once did he complain! To be angry at qadar is to be in a state of heedlessness. "Al Furuq is a book, talks about the difference between the a) Qadha is that Allah has decided to make something happen b) Qadar is that he has enabled it to happen (the means).

Maqdhhi is the thing that happens itself. We don't have to be happy with every Maqdhhi, since Allah subhanahu wa t'ala has decided that there will be evil in this world. This doesn't mean that we will be pleased with sharr because Allah subhanahu wa t'ala isn't. It just means that we can not be displeased with Allah's creation- the world. An analogy is you have a doctor and you go and he declares that he has to cut your arm off. Then the doctor overhears you complain to someone else "I went to this stupid doctor and he cut off my arm!" etc. The doctor will be hurt and saddened that he tried to help you and here you are talking trash. But if he overhears you saying something like "I went to this doctor and Alhamdullillah he helped me, but I am in a lot of pain etc" the doctor will be moved to compassion.

The difference is that it is okay to express your pain, tribulations, etc in a way of releasing it, but you can't complain about Allah subhanahu wa t'ala to His creation. We were not commanded to enjoy tribulation (no takleef) but what Allah says is that tribulations are sent to us to humble us and to bring us closer to Him.

Sum'a

Sum'a is identical to riyaa except that riyaa relates to the eye, while sum'a to the ear (you want to tell others about the good actions you did). "Whoever tells people what he did (of good), Allah will tell people what he really did (of bad) yawmul Qiyamah" The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said. Even if you did the action with sincerity to Allah subhanahu wa t'ala, then told people about it, you ruin your actions. If you make tawbah it rectifies it. Also the one who does something for the sole reason of telling people about it. Should the desire be to benefit people and relate a blessing to them, then this is not blameworthy.

Shidhadh was a brigant from Bani Duada. He was a bad robber that was well known amongst the arabs who used his name in proverbs etc. The Brigant (highway robber) on all those people on the way to Allah is Tamaa.-Abul Abas Al Mursi was a well known religious man. He went to the market and noticed a salesman he knew, he thought "perchance he recognise me and give me a discount"...At that moment he got a call that told him for the peace of deen leave your desire for creation.

The source of tamaa is ghafla of the heart of Allah's providence. "If Allah decrees a harm to you, no one can cure it except Him". "If all of creation got together to harm you, and Allah didn't decree it, then they wouldn't be able to harm you...." The pens have been lifted and the ink is dry.

Question: What if a person makes dua against you? Sh. Hamza's response was: If you are not an oppressor then you shouldn't worry about people's dua against you. If a person makes dua against you and you have not wronged them, then they are oppressing you (committing a dhulm) and they will be accountable to Allah. But if you are an oppressor then you have a lot to worry about, since Allah does not return the dua of the oppressed. The best weapon of a believer is dua!

Imam Junaid said "the only disease is ghafla". If you are really in a state of awareness you wouldn't do wrong.

Ghafla is a state of being fooled. A type of temporary stupidity. Tamaa is the cause of every harm eg. gheeba what's the cause of you wanting to talk about someone else's faults, except that you wish to gain something from it (make yourself look good, envy, etc), another one is lying, we lie to somehow benefit from a situation.

Tamaa will preoccupy your heart during salat and also lead into Mudahanna. A good example of this is Salesmen. Sh. Hamza told a story where he went to buy some ugly yet cheap glasses. When he tried them on, the salesman exclaimed "you look really good!" (mudahanna), Sh. Hamza said "Actually I think they are really ugly but I am buying them because they are cheap". The salesman goes "yeah you are right, I agree with you." "The truth Merchant will be raised with the Martyrs" The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said. It is because they have gotten rid of tamaa from their hearts, and realise that Allah subhanahu wa t'ala is the Razzaq.

In traditional cultures, when you go to the markets all the similar stores are lined up. Like Saudia, Syria etc. you can go the Souq for shoes, the Souq for oils, perfumes, Souq for jewellery etc. In the western paradigm this is the worst marketing strategy. But these salesmen prayed together, ate together, and traditionally if one sold enough for the day he would close and leave the rest to earn their rizq. In the west there are books written like "How to swim with the sharks", or an ad that goes "He is going to eat his competitors for breakfast, then take his kids to Marine World". We don't want to be like that.

The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "Competition over dunya is the disease of civilisation, and it will bring the world down." The whole philosophy of "us against them". We are their "them" and in the end we will wipe each other out. Greeks had the word eroes- a type of longing desire that is never fulfilled. This is the driving force for most people.

The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "Nothing will fill the mouth of the son of Adam except the dust of his grave". "Two people will never be satiated, seekers of knowledge and seekers of dunya" another hadith. You are either of the two, which one would you choose? Tamaa of Allah is good desire, the disease if for other than Allah. If you ask desire what's your trade? He will say earning humiliation. Who is your father? Doubt concerning divine measuring. What is your goal? Deprivation of the very thing that is desired!

Tamaa is your desiring something. Rizq is what is allotted to you, like said earlier there is a difference of opinion on Rizq, some say it will be what you only use up during this lifetime, others say that it is everything you will get. Allah is Ar Razzaq, Ar Razziq- We are the Marzuq, and what we are getting is Rizq.

There are two types of Rizq:

1. Rizq Batini: Hidden/inward rizq, like your knowledge, character, company, etc
2. Rizq Dhahiri: Outward/Manifest rizq like your food, health, wealth etc.

One of the interesting aspects of life is that the same people keep coming back in your life. Considering that the earth has 5 billion people, the people surrounding us that are important to us are very few. This is because our company is part of our rizq. Because the nature of the world is that Allah subhanahu wa t'ala has divided the provisions of people, it may be that your rizq lies in another person's hands. There are then asbab/means that lead you to get your rizq. e.g you are a guest of someone. That dinner that you eat is part of your rizq. Guests are a blessing, and they leave the house with some of your sins (they are a kaffara/expiation). They don't do "damage" because they are eating what belongs to them anyway. Because of these asbab/means, people start thinking that the rizq is from the sabab/means and lose sight of the Musabbib/true cause of the means.

The biggest sign of this is when you get angry for not getting what you want. It is one thing to be angry over your right, if someone oppressed you or took what belonged to you. It is another thing to be angry over something that you "wished/desired" for. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said Jibril (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said to him "No soul will die until it completes the rizq that was allotted to it. So fear Allah and don't do anything haram to obtain your rizq, and don't beg/plead with creation to give you money, don't let the delay of your rizq be a cause of your disobedience to Allah!"

Extended Hopes

Sh. Muhammad Al Mawluud stated that the immediate acting poison of this tamaa, love of dunya, etc. is accustoming/assuming self that death is a long way off. This is intrinsic in our nature and there is wisdom in it. If people didn't have extended hope, they wouldn't even plant a tree, there will be no infrastructure for the next generation. There is a famous story of a Persian King that passed by an old man planting an olive tree. The King asked him "Will this tree benefit you? And you'll die before it comes to fruition" (a good olive tree takes several decades to produce). The old man replied "They planted before us and we ate, we therefore plant so others can eat". The king was impressed and said "This tree already benefited me!" He gave the old man a reward. This extended hope is a Rahma from Allah.

It is interesting that in this modern culture people are beginning to lose hope about the future. There is a morbid perspective of the world. The fast food culture and credit culture is producing a generation that for the first time looks at the future to be worse than the past. Too much hope is bad because it causes hard heartedness and indolence.

The world is divided into two types of people: a) Saeed-Felicitious and b) Shaqee-Wretched.

Aristotle who is the foundational to western philosophy wrote a book called "Ethics". In it he proposes that the goal of life is leisure and happiness and that is reflected in the declaration of independence. "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness".

The original wording was being free of debt when you come into the world, but that was changed to pursuit of happiness. Happiness in the modern context is associated with things, material goods. Islam radically altered the understanding of happiness. Sa'ada is in the next world. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "If you are not angry with me Ya Allah, then I don't care what you do with me". It is the understanding that akhirah is better than now. The opposite concept of Sa'ada is Shaqawa. A Shaqee is one that doesn't have the akhirah. Al Fudhayl Ibn Ladh- both a scholar and a Zahid said there are 5 signs of wretchedness:

1. Hard Heartedness: "Have Mercy on those on the earth and the one in the sky will have Mercy on you."
2. The eye that doesn't weep.
3. Lacking Modesty: "If you have no shame then do whatever you want"
4. Desiring dunya: No one increases in the akhirah except that it harms his dunya, and no one increases his dunya except that it harms his akhirah. In Nurul Yaqeen, the Seerah by an Egyptian scholar, he said that the Sahaba had lost most of the dunya but that didn't swerve them from the quest of akhirah. Quba was such a simple masjid that many of us in the modern context would not have recognised it. We are obsessed with ornamenting the outside now, while we are empty on the inside.
5. Extended hope: It leads to indolence, lack of energy to do things that are obligatory on us. There are some people who have incredible energy to do worldly things, but when it comes to deen they are simply "too tired".

Hassan Al Basri said I saw 70 people of Badr and if you saw any of them you would have thought they were mad. If they saw the best of you they would say these people have no character. If they saw the worst of you they would say these people don't believe in the Akhirah. There is a tradition that is often mistook for a hadith that states "Act for dunya as if you would live forever, and act for Akhirah as if you would die tomorrow". Sh. Uthmaan Bashir explained the above tradition. He said that most people don't understand it, it is a saying used by dunya lovers to justify their actions...."We have to act as if we will live forever.." But if you look at the saying and your situation bifocally it means "I have forever to do my dunya obligations, but I only have one day to fulfil my akhirah obligations". This puts it in perspective. We don't have much time to work for akhirah and that should be our main goal.

"Don't forget your portion of the dunya". Don't forget what Allah has given you so expend for akhirah, or is that the dunya is there so don't forget it. Essentially we are not anti world but are reminded not to forget the akhirah either. If you are not thinking about akhirah the longer you stay on earth the more hard hearted you become.

Children cry easily because their hearts are very supple. They can go from extreme joy to extreme sadness in one day, but as a person gets older this purity becomes harder to achieve. One of the things that the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was made to love was women, because their hearts were more brittle than men.

Regarding the person who benefits people with knowledge, it is not a bad thing to have hope for a long life. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "don't desire to die". If you did wrong you need the time to make Tawbah and rectify your actions, if you did right you need more time to do even more. "Extended hope is a mercy from Allah subhanahu wa t'ala, had it not been for it, you wouldn't see a farmer planting trees, or a woman giving birth". The idea is not to get into a state of paralysis, but reflect. A good exercise is to reflect on the states of death and akhirah. ne of the things that athletes are trained to do is visualisation as a psychological preparation. We should prepare for the inevitable journey to akhirah. When we get into a hyper conscious state that makes this state look like a dream. We wake up when we die.

Some of the Ulemah said if people have shahawat/appetites reflection on death will give them sobriety. The difference between Ar Rajaa and extended hope. Rajaa is hope for Allah. There is a famous hadith that states" The one who love to meet Allah, Allah loves to meet him" Aisha (radhiallaahu anha) said "What about disliking death?" The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) replied "Everyone hates death, but every Mumin wants to meet Allah". Khawf and

Rajaa- We have to have the two sandals of hope and fear. Too much fear leads to despair of the Mercy of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala. It is a common religious illness. Some Christians focus too much on the apocalyptic nature of religion, hellfire, damnation etc. The pilgrims believed only 144,000 will make it to heaven (even Jehovah's witnesses). There were more pilgrims than that, so the odds of making it, weren't so high.

Excessive hope on the other side, leads to a complacency and makes us stop acting. There is an article about Baptism that talks about the fact that Baptists can pretty much do anything since they are saved. Salvation through Christ absolved all they wrong actions. There is no sense of khawf at all. That's why priests can get away with a lot, then come back and preach and people will listen (eg. Jimmy Swagger). Muslims have a high expectation of their leaders. That is why an illegitimate child is Makruh to lead prayer. There is no ithm/bad associated with the child since it wasn't his fault, but it is just a bad example for the community. Umniya- Is blameworthy. This is where the means is not taken but hope is there eg someone wants to lead a healthy life, but they don't watch their diet, they don't exercise, etc and still expect to be healthy. Rajaa is the means is taken and hope is there for the Mercy of Allah.

There is a story where a Pakistani was in a plane with two people. One said I want to go to Sweden there's only 3% Muslims there, the other said I want to go somewhere else there's only 2% Muslims there, the Pakistani turned around and said "why don't you go to hell there are no Muslims there!" There is an assumption amongst Muslims that Muslims aren't going to hell (big surprise when we get there). People have hope on the two Shahadatain (when you are born and when you die). Some people's extent with Islam is when they get married and when they die and still expect to go to Jannah. Rajaa iwhen you do the things you need to do and have hope on Allah. Khawf should be the over riding factor until you die. At the moment of death a believer lets go of khawf and has hope that Allah will be forgiving and Merciful towards him.

Extended hope leads to headlessness about the reality of death which is not a sin in itself. Reflecting on death is like dhikr of Allah, its mandub not fardh (obligatory). The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) highly recommended reflection on death. Including visitation of the graves, for they are a good reminder of death. Trying to make money is Jaiz-mubah-allowed. Even on Hajj we are allowed to trade. Unless it was for Tafakhur, = takkabur, competition, hoarding wealth or putting off tawbah. Then it becomes a sin.

In this culture we have a concept of "sowing your wild oats" do Ma'asi/sins while you have the

energy. That's why Allah loves a young man who is obedient to Him. There are people who do a lot of ma'asi when they are young, then they get old, and repent but then go into this self righteous mode. All of a sudden they forget their past, and start pointing fingers at others.

Disease: Tattayur (superstition)

Tattayur comes from a Jahili concept called Teera (which is a root arabic word from Tair, bird). When Arabs wanted to make a decision on something they would go to a flock of birds, and run at it. If the birds went to the left they took it as a bad omen. If the birds went to the right they took it as a good omen.

Yemeenis right, comes from the fact that Yemen lies on the right.

Shamal is left- comes from the fact that Sham is on the left.

A digression on maps/geography

The Muslims traditionally put the South on the top and the North on the bottom of the world map. Idrisi was the first map maker of the world (a Muslim). He put the south on top and north on the bottom of the map. The Europeans realised the significance of the South being on top, it puts Africa over the top of Europe and nothing over the top of Arabia, so they actually flipped it.

In Arabic language south is referred to as up, and north to as bottom. Australians caught on to this, and made maps with the South up. It's actually interesting to look at a southern map, we realise how close Ireland is to Morocco and Germany to England. etc. Muslims need to make maps with the South on top again.

Tattayur

Teera is a superstition. Mutattayir is a pessimist. This action was based on the ignorance that everything belongs to Allah, and Muslims should have a good opinion of Allah. Tattayur is of two types:

1. Those that are dangerous in the normative state- e.g if you see something really harmful like a Cobra, then you should avoid. It is incumbent by Shariah to avoid harm coming to you.

2. Having a bad opinion based on no proof- eg. black cats, ladders, knock on wood (based on Pagan worship of trees), that's teera.

The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "You'll never be free of three things...." and one of them is Tattayur. Superstitions are a part of our nature. The cure of tattayur is if you feel "a bad omen", lets say you see a ladder and you don't want to walk under it...then just get over your nafs, and do it! Don't make dua against people, and actually don't belittle any Muslim because you never know he/she may be a Walee of Allah.

Disease: Dhann

Bad opinion of others. Suspicion without facts to support your thoughts. The worst case is when you have a bad opinion of people who are outwardly righteous. Wasma-Waseema is a good face. Firasa is the ability of seeing the goodness/badness of a person through his/her face. Gheeba of the heart is a bad unfounded opinion against someone is actually written against you. Allah doesn't take you for what just occurs to your heart, but He does take to account azm/a distinct decision made by the heart.

If the heart is convinced without any proof then it is written against you. "Beware of bad opinion because it is the most false of speech". Some people have no daleel "I just know he is". Nothing wrong with doubting someone. If it is based on something concrete. Shakk is Doubt I don't know. Dhanni – to make a decision without proof.

What if you doubt someone?

If he is a fasiq (a fasiq is someone who commits major sins openly or minor sins consistently) don't take the word of a fasiq at face value. Find out if what he says is true or not.

Don't trust anyone with your deen, family, wealth unless you try them a thousand, thousand, times.

One of the poets said, if you have a good opinion of people, in these days (of corruption), then that is foolishness. Be cautious.

If the time is bad then it is incumbent upon Zakat distributors to check out people, who claim they deserve zakat. A bad opinion of a person, who has evidence is bad, is not a sin, its commonsense. If he makes tawbah, then don't remind them of their past. That is wrong. "A good opinion of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala and a good opinion of His slaves, are two things a believer is given". No servant was ever harmed by having a good opinion. People are innocent until proven guilty. "I am in the opinion of my servants, so if he thinks good of me, he finds good, and if he thinks bad he finds bad". If you are a true Mu'umin then everything will be good for you.

Disease: Ujub (exalting the blessing and forgetting who gave you the blessing)

Imam Al Ghazali said the difference between ujub and kibr is that kibr needs two people:

The Mutakkabir (arrogant one) and the Mutakkabir alayhi (he one whom arrogance is shown).

A Mu'ajjib doesn't need a second person, he is one that is simply impressed with himself. The definition of uju is exalting the blessing and forgetting who gave you the blessing. In this culture when someone says "You are beautiful", we say "Thank you" as if we had anything to do with it. If Allah subhanahu wa t'ala made someone beautiful/talented/ etc then they should praise Allah subhanahu wa t'ala. "The Master of Rhetoric is he who speaks so eloquently, that people think I can do that too." "I worked so hard and I made it!" People think that its by their accomplishment that they were successful instead of Allah's aid. "Allah subhanahu wa t'ala makes every creator and his creation", so airplanes, cars, computers, etc are all creations of Allah. Once you realise that you will lose your ujub over anyone who knows something there is someone who knows more, this is characterised in the story of Musa and Al Khidhr.

Vanity is excessive pride in ones accomplishment or beauty. The root meaning of vanity is emptiness. There's always another side to things. As a result of your impotence you can neither create any benefit nor harm. Ignorance of Allah's Will and Mastery over creation leads to foolishness like ujub.

Disease: Al-Ghish (Fraud, to conceal fault/harm either for religious/worldly pursuits even from a protected minority)

Adornment of a fault or making an evil look good. In the Shariah it is haram to sell something without pointing out its faults. This is prominent in modern advertising. In Greece the Sophists (sp), were ones who mastered rhetoric. They believed that the most important thing is to be convincing. Learning the "art of persuasion". It doesn't matter if something is right/wrong, as long as you can justify it. In Islam rhetoric is the art of embellishing the truth. (A totally different world view). "Men are either smart wolves or dumb sheep", and dumb sheep get eaten by smart wolves- a modern, western philosophy. This is Ghish a it is Haram.

Disease: Ghadhab (Anger)

As for the swelling ocean of all these diseases, (ghadhab), if you come to it's shores you'll see things that will astonish you. Say what you want of it without constraint. This is a weak hadith, but nonetheless important. A man came to the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and asked him "tell me the best thing to get to near to Allah", The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam)] responded "Good Character". The man went to his right and asked the same question, the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) again responded the same way. The man went to his left and asked the same thing, the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) again answered the same way. The man went behind him, and finally the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "Haven't you understood? Do not get angry!".

A man once asked the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) "What is the worst thing that one can incur concerning Allah". The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) responded "His Wrath". The man asked "How do you avoid it?" The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) responded "Don't be angry!". There is another famous hadith where a man came to the Prophet Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and asked him "Give me advice". The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) responded "Don't be angry!", He asked three times and the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) responded the same way. Ghadhab and the controlling of Ghadhab is key to good character. It doesn't mean don't feel anger. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) himself said " I am but a man, I get angry like you". Anger in itself is not a bad thing, if it is transmuted in a positive way. Don't allow anger to take control of you.

Anger is like a hunting dog, if you don't train it, it won't get you what you need. Anger is essential to human existence, without anger injustices would go unchecked. We are encouraged to get angry only for the sake of Allah, not for ourselves.

Imam Al Ghazali identified four essential qualities in a human soul. This is a model that looks at the human soul and recognises certain characteristics. It has been used in other traditions as well, not just Islamic.

1. Quwwatul Ilm: The Rational Soul within the human being there is a power related to what man knows.
2. Quwwatul Ghadhab: Irrascible Soul. This element relates to emotions the basis of which is anger. Rumi said the wisdom behind the prohibition of Khamar is that the core of man, which is angry and belligerent is exposed when he is drunk. We are otherwise veiled by the Rahma of Allah, but when we drink we remove that veil.
3. Quwwatul Shahwa. This is the appetitive soul.
4. Quwwatul Adl. This is the power that harmonises the above three.

Those powers within the soul above are related to the cardinal virtues (which is also within the Christian and other traditions).

1. Wisdom/Hikma: When the rational soul is balanced the result is hikma. "However is given hikmah is given much good". Hikma is the mean between stupidity and trickery. When it is lacking, one becomes foolish. When it is in excess one becomes manipulative. This trickery is a dominant trait in CEO's of modern corporations.
2. Courage/Shaja'a: When the irascible soul is in control the result is shaja'a. The extremes are impetuosity/irrational behavior (when it is in excess), and cowardice (when it is lacking).
3. Iffa/Temperance: 'iffa is the mean between Jumud/Indifference/no energy (which is unhealthy in shariah) and the extreme is fisq (ne is who a slave to his appetitive soul). The balance is 'iffa.
4. Adl/Justice: Justice has no extremes, it only has an opposite which is dhulm/oppression. When

everything is in balance within the soul, the result is a just man. When of the elements is out of balance, the result is oppression to oneself and others.

The only human being that ever completely balanced these is the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). This is why the more you emulate him, the more you become a just person. He was never an extremist in anything, his fasting, his anger, etc. If we look at his Sunnah (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam), we see many traditions that are based on balancing our nafs.

The worst vessel son of Adam can fill is his stomach" This is the justice of the stomach. If we absolutely have to fill it, we are told to leave 1/3 for food, 1/3 for water, and 1/3 for air.

Sexual appetites: don't go over limit. As you grow older this aspect of yourself diminishes, as you look more toward akhirah. Those people who don't believe in Akhirah, still want to engage in mental shahawat (since the physical shahwa is naturally down), the result is the emergence of the Viagra society.

The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) never allowed his anger to get the best of him. He had more knowledge than any other human being but never used it for trickery. If we look at the Khulafa Ur Rashidun, we see that each one of them embodied one of the cardinal virtues as their dominant character type.

a) Abu Bakr (radhiallaahu anhu): his main virtue was courage. No one was more courageous than Abu Bakr. What is the reason people hesitate to give? Fear of the unknown. Abu Bakr was the most generous at all times, he gave up all his wealth for the sake of Islam, and that is Shaja'a. He was one whose heart never wavered when others around him did. He was Thabit.

b) Umar (radhiallaahu anhu): Umar's main trait was justice.

c) Uthman (radhiallaahu anhu): Uthman was 'affif (even the angels were shy around Uthman ((radhiallaahu anhu).

d) Ali (radhiallaahu anhu): Ali was endowed with Hikma (he was called Babul Ilm, the door to knowledge).

If you look at the Siratal Mustaqeem. Mustaqeem means upright. Istiqamah is perfectly balanced. There are two ways to deviate from the perfectly balanced path:

1) Ziada which is being excessive in what's wajib. Christians are the archetype of this example. They invented Monkery though they were not obliged to go into this extreme ascetism. The main thing about excess is that you will not be able to fulfill it. "Don't go to excess because Allah won't taper with His rewards until you taper off".

The extreme of 'iffa is puritan. The result is that you are no longer in balance, and eventually you will go to the other extreme. The Europeans came here as puritans to be perfect in their religion and the end of that era has emerged into the Modern American society which is full of satiating your shahawat. In the Christian methology they go into extremes with shaja'a too, "turn the other cheek". With this concept, they end up massacring more human beings than the history of any human group. In justice, they demand justice in everything, which is essentially based on dhulm. As it is justice for them, but oppression for everyone else. The law is based on lawyers, and how many loopholes they can find to let others get away with things. With knowledge it started being knowledge that was beneficial to humanity, and now it's turned to trickery.

2. Naqs: Being deficient in the Obligations. The archetype of this are the Jews. Musa's (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) complaint to the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) during the Miraj was that the Jews couldn't even pray twice a day. There are plenty of examples in the Quran on how the Jews tried to get away with not fulfilling their obligations.

These are simply archetypes and not absolute. Going astray is dhal: the root word is to be in love. Excessiveness leads people astray. A Muslim is supposed to be in the middle of the two. The root of Christian doctrine is Rahma/mercy. They believe that whatever they do they will be forgiven no matter what. With the Jews it's the opposite. The ghadhab and rahma have to be balanced.

There is Shariah and Haqiqah. The law and the spirit of the law. The law is rules, and the spirit is Rahma. When they are balanced (iman on the inside, and Islam on the outside) we get the Muhsin. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "Beware of Tyrannical Scholars". The concept of the ignorant worshipper- embodiment of a Christian or extreme sufi. The balance is to be a Sufi-Faqeeh. Imam Shafi said about the two (sufi and faqeeh) "Don't have one without the other. A faqeeh alone will be hardhearted" A sufi alone, leads to this new age phenonemon of

"all is good", "all is one", "we are all going to heaven"..etc. -Christians are closer to us, because we are on the side of Rahma "Forgiveness is closer to Taqwa" - "When love exists there is no need for justice".

The Sahaba loved each other so much, and didn't want to hold each other accountable over minor things. The great Fitna in Islam was the case of Sayyidna Ali (radhiallaahu anhu) and Sayyidna Muawiya (radhiallaahu anhu). Ali (radhiallaahu anhu) wanted forgiveness, and Muawiya (radhiallaahu anhu) wanted justice. We are supposed to love all our leaders despite their mistakes. In this case Sayyidna Muawiya (radhiallaahu anhu).

Ghadhab comes from something that's essential to human nature. If you look at the brain there are three dominant centers:

1. Lowest Brain: R brain: Reptilian brain, this is the appetative center of the brain where urges originate.
2. Mid Brain: Emotions are centered here. The root of all emotion is ghadhab/anger. This is the first emotion that children is ghadhab, through crying, tantrums, they learn to say "No" before "yes".

The Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) "Love your beloved up to a point, because one day he might hate you, hate your enemy up to a certain point, because one day you may love him. The wisdom is to be balanced. The Arabs used to say "don't be too sweet you will get eaten up. And don't be too bitter you'll be thrown away".

- 3) The new brain: This is the rational center of the brain.

The reptilian mode is totally reactionary, no humanity. If you are in the mid brain mode, you will be an emotional person, and some people are totally rational everything is theoretical when it comes to them.

There are three main reasons that people get angry:

1. Primal needs: When your food, shelter, life, etc is being threatened. This is survival you have to respond to it. If you don't you are stupid. It is courage to fight for your rights. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "Any one who dies defending his property, dies a Shahid". This is the Ultimate amr bil Ma'ruf wal Nahi anil Munkar (enjoining good and forbidding evil) in society no one should feel that it is okay to just take someone else's property.

2. Position: This is related to seeing yourself, dignity, job etc. It is getting angry over a sense of being belittled.

3. Specific to a person e.g an Aalim/scholar may get mad to see someone mistreating a book, while to an illiterate farmer that doesn't mean anything to him. To the farmer though, if someone mishandles his pitchfork.

Imam Al Ghazali said the first one is healthy, the second is healthy up to a point. Don't get angry over what doesn't benefit you to get angry about. Don't obsess yourself with little things, let it go. The third situation if there is ghairah (the idea that something is yours and you don't want harm to come to it) then its okay.

The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) encouraged Ghairah. When Abu Sa'd said "If I see my wife with another man I would kill him!". The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "I have more ghairah then him, and Allah has more ghairah than me". If a Muslim sees a non Muslim make fun of their deen, this ghairah should prompt him to defend the deen. Ghairah is good, for the husband and wife, otherwise adultery will be rampant in society.

Cure

Ghadhab has two cures, one of them will remove the anger when it comes and the other suppresses it. Remember this in order to be ornamented with the quality of removal of anger, then humility and forbearance are a must. An arrogant person will always be angry. If you are seeing yourself you will be angry. Humility is praised by all sages. "The one who humbles himself before Allah, Allah will elevate him, the one who elevates himself before Allah,

Allah subhanahu wa t'ala will bring him down". The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was the most forbearing of all people.

All the Prophets have been characterised by humility and forbearance. You can prevent anger by realising there is no action except from Allah. Recognise that "La Illaha Illa Allah".

"The strong man is not the wrestler but one who can control his anger". Al Ghazali said the stupid people see virility and macho tendencies as being courageous. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) cure for anger was "If you are standing, then sit down, if you are sitting then recline. If that doesn't work take wudhu and pray". Taking wudhu (with cold water), will put out the heat of Shaytaan. Anger is from shaytaan and shaytan is made from fire.

The nature of anger is you start rising. If you feel it, sit down, and even leave the room if necessary. Remember to say "Audhu Billahi Minal Shaytani Rrajeem". An angry man once hired a man to insult him, and listened to him until he could control his anger. "Anger will afflict the best of my ummah" The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said. Umar (radhiallaahu anhu) was the best example of one who mastered his anger throughout his life development. By the end of his Khalifate, he was very forgiving. Once the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was sitting with some Quraishi women and when they saw Umar (radhiallaahu anhu) approaching they fled and hid behind a curtain. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) laughed and called them out. Umar (radhiallaahu anhu) was perplexed "Why aren't you fleeing from the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and he is more worthy of that type of respect?" The women said "yes, but you are meaner". The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) laughed and told him "if shaytaan saw you coming down one path, he will go down another."

The three souls are developed with age:

1. The first 7 years: the appetative soul is developed, allow the children to discover the world, let them play and indulge for this is the time they grow into their bodies and discover their limitations.
2. The second seven years: is ghadhab, this is the time to discipline them and don't let them get angry with you.
3. The next 7 years: The rational soul is developed. This is when they need your guidance and counsel.

There is a hadith that states "Play with them till they are 7, discipline them for another 7, and befriend them for 7 years".

"Knowledge and forebearance and gained through acquisition". You are not born an alim, you need Mujahada, study, reflect, etc That's what Umar (radhiallaahu anhu) did with forebearance, he learned to it. Imam Al Ghazali gave the example of the pen. If you have bad writing go to a master, ask him to show you, tell him to draw the letters so you can copy them. It takes time and effort to learn how to write well. It is the same with good character.

There are three things that you need:

1. Know what good character and bad character is.
2. Mujahadah: Struggle for the sake of Allah to implement it in your life.
3. Sahba: Find people with good character and be in their company.

Imam Shafi was asked about his excellent character. He said "I looked at what my detractors said about me. If I found it in myself I worked hard to eliminate it". Prophet Isa (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was asked about his excellent character and he said "I looked at the bad character of people and avoided it". Sayyidna Ali said "youth is a type of madness and the cure is to get old".

We have about 4 more diseases and then we'll go into more sections for the cure of all diseases. We have to treat these diseases like the "gordian knot". The story of the Gordian knot. There was a knot in Turkey that no one could untie. So an announcement was made that whoever could untie this knot would rule the land. Many tried and many failed. Finally when Alexander the Great conquered the land, the knot was brought to him. He took a look at it, took out his sword, and with one swoop cut through the knot. The treatment of these diseases is the same. We just need to cut right through them.

The 4 enemies of man are: shaytaan, nafs, hawaa, and dunya.

Disease: Ghafla (Heedlessness)

Imam Junayd said this is the root of all diseases, some scholars say its tamaa and others procrastination (which is also a type of ghafla.). This is a serious illness of the heart. Ghuful is

inattentiveness, heedlessness, being unaware. A simpleton in arabic is a Mughafal. The defining factor of ghafla is Sujdatul Sahw. Sujud Sahw is provided for us in prayer though the prayer time is so short! Allah knew how forgetful we are.

Insaan comes from the word uns- which could mean intimacy since we are social beings. Or nsiya which means to forget. in the Quran Al Insaan sometimes refers to Adam (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam). The first slip of Adam (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) was being taken unaware. That's why we have to be vigilant. Ghafla occurs as a result of the absence of vigilance and wakefulness. When Sayidda Ali (radhiallaahu anhu) said "People are asleep and when they die they wake up", what he meant was that people are heedless (ghafiloon) on their destination and that's the prime reason they do what they do. If humans were really awake they wouldn't sin.

This is the metaphor of the cave. Where all humans are in this cave, and there is a light at the very back of the cave. This light is causing this long shadows and people are so fascinated by these shadows they are convinced this is their reality. Then one of them gets away from the cave, and sees the sun, skies, the trees, and the beauty outside. So he runs back and tell them "Wake up this is not real, it's all an illusion! Reality is outside...come with me" and these people turn on him and kill him. This is essentially the story of the Messengers, where Prophets come and because of the unveiling of Knowledge from Allah, they try to wake us up from our illusionary reality.

Samid is another word that's used in the Quran. Samidun is a type of ghafla but has more awareness to it.

"You were in ghafla about this (yaumul Qiyamah) and we removed the veil". There is a veil that prevents us from seeing things as they truly are. The Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) used to pray "Oh Allah show me things as they truly are". The Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) also used to pray "Oh Allah show me the truth as the truth and give me the ability to follow it, and show me falsehood as falsehood and give me the ability to stay away from it."

Ghafla is being heedless about what Allah has commanded us to do and what he has prohibited us to do. A Mu'umin when reminded of something wrong he is doing will automatically say "Astaghfirullah". But the arrogant ones when told to fear Allah, they get mad at the people.

The cure for it lies in having good company, people that will tell you when you are doing wrong, and encourage you to do good.

Cure

The cure lies in four rectifying qualities:

1. Istighfaar

Realisation brings you to repentance. The scholars said "Istighfar and salah ala Nabi are the two dhikr of the end of time". Tawbah is a cure for ghafla. We should make istighfar at least 70 to 100 times a day (that is what the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) himself did!). We should also memorise Sayyidul Istighfar.

Muhasabah: using the idea of the merchant who counts money at the end of the day, to see his profits/losses. Look at your day and see if you had a loss with Allah make tawbah. and if there was a gain with Allah give thanks. For Allah gives more to His grateful servants.

2. Ziyarah

Visiting righteous people. We all have stations with Allah subhanahu wa t'ala, beginning with the Nabi, Sadiq, Shaheed, and Saleh. Really all the above are saliheen. Saluha is to be sound and this is related to salamah. One whose heart isn't diseased. The definition of Saleh is to give Allah subhanahu wa t'ala what is due to Him and give His slaves what is due to them.

Haqqal Allah: The right of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala is taqwa from His servant.

Haqqal Ibad: The right of Allah's subhanahu wa t'ala servants is the dealing with them in daily obligations.

The Saleh doesn't cheat or lie to people. Most ulamah encourage visiting the Saliheen that are dead too e.g when going to Madinah making sure you visit Jannatul Baqee. There is a greater

benefit in visiting the graves of the righteous. There is a difference of opinion whether women can visit graves or not. There is also an adab of visiting graves. Don't do grave worship, tying knots, asking for favours, etc. That's what gives tassawuf a bad name. That is not Tassawuf it is just cheating.

There are a lot of people who go by the names of Pir, Sheikh, etc and they don't have much knowledge at all. They inherit these titles from their forefathers, and people treat them special. There are a lot of pretenders out there so be careful who you consider a Saleh. "Allah made the world huge and created numerous ways for halal provisions, anytime you see someone using religion to serve his dunya he is in bad condition" said of the righteous men. People can make their living through teaching Quran etc. the point is not to amass wealth.

Imam Malik had massive wealth and he consistently gave it away to people. In the Muslim world there is a huge gulf between esoteric/exoteric Islam. We are out of balance. We should all desire to be one of the Saliheen. A poet once said "If a man doesn't gain heights he can at least aspire for heights, and whoever is content with less than heights he is less than heights". The highest aspiration is to be close to Allah subhanahu wa t'ala. If you don't think Allah subhanahu wa t'ala can make you one of His Awliyaa in an instant then you don't know much about His Qudra (power). These Saliheen are not chatty and they will make dua for you. One of Sh.Hamza Yusuf's friends hates kissing hands. He went to visit Sh. Mulla Ramadhan and he swore that he felt pressure on his head to bow down and kiss his hand! Fortunately these people still exist, Murattal Hajja's wife, Maryam and they had a servant Qabulah. People used to visit the couple and then also visit the servant and ask for dua from her. Another righteous woman is Fatima bint Nawfal and Aisha bint Binni. Only Allah knows their true stations but we are commanded to observe the outward.

3. Prayer on the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam)

In Pakistan this is called the Darud. Ubai Bin Ka'b asked the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) "How much of my dhikr should I make on you, 1/4?" The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) replied "that's good and if you can increase it's better" "1/2?", The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) "That's good and if you can increase it's better" "3/4?" "That's good and if you can increase it's better". He finally said "I will do all my dhikr on you." Prayer on the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) purifies the self. We are recommended to do at least 500 times a

day. Sh. Uthman Dan Fodio used to do it 5000 times a day. And he saw the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) in visions all the time. Imam Malik never slept a night without seeing the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam).

4. Reciting the Quran with Taddabur/Reflection

We have to do a wurd of Quran each day, at least a hizb, or a juzuu a day. If not at least the daily recommended surahs like Mulk (after Isha), Yaseen (after Fajr) and Waqiah (after Maghrib). Every substance in the world resonates at a specific wavelength. Medicine resonates in our bodies to cure the diseases. The thing about the Quran is that the sound waves (in arabic) resonate in every part of your body.

A man asked about Islam and said he had read the entire Quran. Sh. Hamza told him "you haven't read the Quran until you have read it in Arabic". The man disagreed. Then Sh. Hamza started reading just the beginning of Suratul Rahmaan. The man paused and said "I now understand". Part of the meaning of the Quran is not even understood in this realm of existence.

Allah warns the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) in the Quran about sitting with people who "He put in a state of heedlessness". "Those who deviated and Allah made them deviate more". Ghaflah is a punishment and result of our own sins.

Ghafla ends at the moment we die. We want to be more in a state of wakefulness than heedlessness. Umar (radhiallaahu anhu) said the best remembrance of Allah is when you get to the limit set by Allah subhanahu wa t'ala e.g when you want to do a Ma'siya and then you think of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala and that prevents you from doing haraam. Ghafla becomes a disease when it prevents you from doing what Allah subhanahu wa t'ala has commanded you to do. We are not obliged to make dhikr of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala all the time. But the more dhikr we do the less we'll fall into Ghafla.

Disease: Ghill (when the heart is bound to treachery or khiyana)

This disease is related to rancor/malice/anger/resentfulness. The root word is Ghul-aghlal-things that bind you.

Khadi'a is to betray/trick. Hiqd is resentful malice, is what holds ghill together. "Don't put in our hearts ghill for the people who have imaan". Ghill will kill our hearts. In Jannah Allah subhanahu wa t'ala removes ghill completely from the righteous people. One man who was fighting Sayiddna Ali during the battle of Camel came to him and apologised and Sayidna Ali (radhiallaahu anhu) told him not to worry for in Jannah Allah will remove ghill from our hearts.

Cure

Show goodness to that person. The nature of Ihsan is "The hearts are naturally inclined towards one who does good to them". When you are good to a noble person, you possess him. When you are good to a lowly person he becomes more rebellious. The point is to do your part and the outcome is not in your hands. Someone wondered why Kuffar can live together peacefully and that is because shaytaan doesn't bother with them. Shaytaan has despaired that he will be worshipped in the greater Arabian Peninsula but he hasn't despaired of Fitna and putting ghill in believer's hearts against each other. Remember that on Monday and Thursdays Allah subhanahu wa t'ala forgives people and the angels say that these two people don't get along so Allah says "leave them till they rectify themselves". Our sins aren't forgiven if we have ghil for another person. All you have to do is be righteous on your end, and if the other person doesn't respond that's up to them.

Disease: Fakhar/Kibr (Pride)

Boasting is different from Fakhar in that Fakhar is boasting about something you have not earned e.g I am a Shareef. In the battle of Uhud, while all the Quraishi's used to boast "I am the son of so and so", the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) used to say "I am the son of the women named Atika". No one used to brag about the women. If you boast about parents who had honor even if it's true, they have left behind a bad child. The man is not one who says "my father was..." he is one who says "I Am". This is what children do...it's a childish phenomenon. The mountain of this tendency is Arrogance. Deem that mountain insignificant if you desire to destroy it.

Kibar is old age. Kibr is arrogance. Root is kabura or kabura-to be big or grow old. Kabir is great. Kibrun is the manifestation of kibr in the heart. Takkabur is when it manifests in the limbs (action).

There are many signs of kibr and it's frightening because we all have some degree of it. Rarely would you meet one who doesn't have any kibr. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) "no one would enter Paradise who has the weight of an atom of pride in his heart". "I will divert my signs from those who show arrogance on this earth without right". Without right in this ayah, means that there are times when Takkabur is needed. "Allah will seal the heart of every arrogant tyrant". "Allah doesn't love those who have istikbaar". Istikbar is deeming the self great, the root of which is ujub. There is a hadith that states" Allah said "greatness is my izar (cloak) and adhama my lower garment who ever tries to challenge me on either I will break his back!"

Ibn Hajj said "Shaytan go into this Ummah by two ways: In the Eastern by giving their children names of grandiosity e.g Akbar, Adheem, etc. In the Western by causing Muslims to mispronounce good names e.g "Abdul Qadir" become Abdul Ghadir (the slave of the treacherous one). Imam Yahya Al Nawawi's father named him MuhyiDeen and he completely refused that name and demanded to be called Yahya. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) had a wife called Barra and he named her Zaynab, don't "zakki" yourselves, he said.

The truest names according to the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) are Harith (the one who sows) and Humam (the one with one with concerns), because all of us sow and have concerns. The best names according to the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) are Ahmad, and any names that begin with Abdul. There is a hadith by Tirmidhi that states "on the day of Qiyamah the people of arrogance will be turned to atoms (or ants), and everyone would walk on them, and then they would go to a prison in Jahannam called Bolis".

There are different types of Istikbaar:

1. The worst one is Takabbur of refusing the truth and submitting to Ibadah.

One of the Sahabah told the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) "I am a man who loves beauty so I wear good shoes and nice clothes. Is this Kibr?" The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) replied "Allah is beautiful and loves beauty". The point is the reason why he loved to put on nice things (because he loves beauty), and the point is not to outdo others...a perfect example is some Muslim weddings, and to what extent people would go to out do each other's outfits. The idea of Istikbaar is that it has two faces to it:

2. Want to be great-A desire to be great for the sake of Allah is good. The Sahabas himma was high, but one which is blameworthy is to try to show people you are better than they. Allah commands us though to show non Muslims that we are better. According to the Christians the world's problem is simple. People are corrupt/sinful by nature. But Allah commands us to show them that this is not true (we are Witnesses unto them). Towards the end of time there will be no more Shuhadaa. And people will become Kuffar. Allah subhanahu wa t'ala will give the dunya to Kaffirs, and Muslims will leave their deen because they also want the dunya. This is scary because it is happening. The seal/raan over the heart, depending on the power of Truth and the source of it, is something that can crack, but if nothing is done (i.e Tawbah) it will seal up again e.g when you listen to an inspirational Khutbah it may move the heart, but action has to follow.

There are different types of Kibr with different qualities:

1. It is fixed in the heart and the person considers himself better than other people. Once the Sahaba told the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) concerning one man who they deemed to be righteous. Suddenly the man appeared at the gathering and the Sahaba pointed him out to the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) immediately discerned in his face and said "I see traces of shaytaan in this man's face". When the man joined the group the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) asked him "By Allah, I ask you, did your nafs tell you when you came to this gathering that no one here is better than you?" The man said "yes". The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) saw kibr in his heart and wanted the Sahaba to be careful over who they deemed righteous and not. Imam Ghazali said of all people it is the people of ilm that have more danger of kibr than others. If you fight it and force yourself to suppress the fruits of the tree of kibr in your heart, then they wouldn't emerge in your actions.

2. Manifesting kibr to others. This is when you look down on people, or frown in people's faces. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) never frowned in someone's face.

3. Takakabur because of hasab (qualities that you have) and nasab (lineage).

Traditionally they went together. If you are from a noble family you had to act noble. If you are from Quraish you had to be dignified. (e.g a tribe had a quality because of nasab people emulated that quality). e.g some Arabs feel they are better than Indians. One Arab remarked to Sh. Hamza that "I never thought a non arab could be a real Muslim". In Pakistan, the Indian is less...if you are from Hyderabad you are somehow better. etc. There is racist terminology in language too. We

have to remember that Allah says "The best of you is the one with most Taqwa". Even with Nasab it's action that counts...without action...nasab doesn't mean a thing.

Cure

Do you recognise where you are from? You are created from a vile fluid. One of the Salafi remarked that he didn't know why someone was arrogant when all he was carrying between his two sides was a bag of feaces - "To be arrogant with one who is arrogant is a type of worship". To use this as a cure for one who is arrogant, to give him a taste of his own medicine. If you feel you are righteous know that it is kibr. There was a righteous man who was sitting in a gathering and he moved his foot when another moved out of deference. The other man said "you did that for me?" and he said "I don't see anyone here who is worse than me!". If you are aware of your humility you are Muttakabbir. It's better though to fake humility than to be an outright Mutakkabir. You have to practice, - the brain learns through repetition, consistency imbeds an action in the brain e.g driving, most people drive in a completely sub conscious state. Interesting thing about stroke/dementia is that even with loss of brain they retain the things they did repetitively. Ilm is by repetition. Force yourself to be humble until it becomes a natural thing.

d. Kibr because of beauty: The cure is to know that beauty is an illusion. You don't retain your beauty and also Allah gave it to you. It's superficial and really stupid. There was a study done on beautiful people and the result was that they were really average. They realised when you put average eyes, nose, lips, etc on one face, the result is what people deem beautiful. There was a hadith where the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) asked Aisha who came in? And Aisha said "The short lady". The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) rebuked her and said "you have backbitten her". Because Aisha felt she was taller than her, and hence made the comment.

e. Kibr with wealth: this is with kings and merchants. They look down on others. There was a famous person who was on a helicopter looking down on a ski lodge (for not wealthy people) and she commented "look at all those little people down there". At that moment the helicopter tipped and crashed! We are all little people.

f. Kibr because of strength: The example is the wrestler who bragged that no one could throw him and the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) threw him twice. You have to remember even with physical strength you will get old.

g. Kibr in teachers who have a lot of students, or one with powerful relatives, or a royal family etc.

h. Takkabur because of knowledge: most insidious. People naturally are in awe of knowledgeable people and they show them deference, this is dangerous for the heart.

The main reason why people don't submit is Takkabur. A lot of people have a big problem with being a slave to Allah. They would rather be a slave to their genitals, petty goals, etc. but not their own Creator!

The cure is really knowing your Lord and yourself. Reflecting on the self will come to the realisation that are completely bound by our enslavement to the Creator. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "I am the best of the Children of Adam and I am not boasting!" The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) fakhar was in his Uboodiya to Allah subhanahu wa t'ala. Another saying of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) "My impoverishment before Allah is my glory". Whoever knows will be humbled (And Allah will raise him). The station of kibr negates the possibility of being grateful. The abd can't be Muttakabir. The nature of humility is that it takes you to gratitude. It helps you see things in the right perspective. The feeling of being undeserving makes you grateful for every little thing you have. Deem the big mountain of kibr insignificant. Believers use the terms "Allahu Akbar", "MashaAllah", "Alhamdulillah" to keep reminding us of our Source.

Disease: Dhull and Dha'a (abasement or humiliation)

Wasita (the mean). The dangers of virtues is that virtues are means between two extremes (except for justice which only has an opposite). In this case the virtue is humility, when there is a ziada (excess) the result is arrogance. When there is a naqs (reduction), the result is dhull. Dhilla was part of an affliction given to Bani Israel for being disobedient. Allah afflicts people with dhilla for their sins. Many a Muslim country are in this state. Many Muslims would lie, cheat, etc just to get a visa for this country. People can get afflicted with tribulation but bear it with dignity. "A believer does not abase himself" A hadith. Humility is not the same as humiliation. Dha'a is to be low. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "Nothing raises itself except that Allah abases it" With Allah it is actually good to have dhull. We should be dhaleel in front of Allahsubhanahu wa t'ala only and not His creation. Sh. Jilani saw all the doors of Allah crowded except that of humbleness. Be proud in front of a rich, arrogant, person. The noble things of this world, are the rich, humble person. And the Sunni who

is a Shareef. When man becomes rich, he deems himself self sufficient, leading to transgressions. "To show arrogance in front of an arrogant person is part of Ibadah" The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam).

Disease: Blame Hating

Part of our nature is that we don't like to be blamed. We teach our kids from a young age that blame is bad (it comes with beating, frowns, etc) and praise is good (comes with smiles, gifts, etc). Hatred of blame can become a disease. Concerns with creations opinions becomes an impediment to Ihsaan. The reality is that we are going to die at anytime and we should not worry about no one else but Allah. This disease prevents one from doing the right thing because the right thing is often what others detest. Courageous stances most often become known later. Geronimo a Native American fighter who fought incessantly for his land, was betrayed even by his own people. Malcolm X was taking positions that were very unpopular back then. If he had worried about people he wouldn't have said the truth. Even their own enemies co opt them now... now that they are no threat to them.

Overcoming this barrier entails knowing that no benefit or harm can come from anyone except Allah subhanahu wa t'ala. Recognise the two names of Allah Al Nafi (The one who benefits) and Al Dharr (The one who harms). If you notice this is a cure for many diseases. Thinking that others can somehow benefit us is being delusional about reality itself. But still recognise the Asbab (means for things to happen in this world). The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) still wore two coats in the battle of Uhud. We should use diplomacy and our intellect in all situations. "The greatest Jihad is speaking the truth in front of a tyrant" the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said. But there are situations when we have to measure things out.

The impermissibility of this disease is what leads to the prohibited. e.g If you have to enjoin good and forbid evil and you get scared or you need to pray but you are afraid of your co-workers etc. Being worried about blame for doing haraam things is normal. Real Imaan doesn't establish itself in our hearts until blame and praise mean the same thing to us (i.e. all that you do is for the sake of Allah). In the desert they never encourage little children to display their Quranic skills, knowledge, etc. because it leads to a desire to do these things for praise, and thus the early roots of Riyaa. It's normal to have some pride in the achievement of your children..eg. When the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) asked his Sahabah "Which tree is like a Mumin?" and no one could answer. Abdullah bin Umar bin Khattab knew it was a palm tree but

was afraid to say so, because everyone around him was older. He later told his father, and Umar Bin Khattab remarked "I would have loved for you to have said that".

Disease: Antipathy towards Death

It's when one flees from death, and hates for it to be mentioned, as if he doesn't recall Allah's words "That every soul will taste death". This death you are fleeing from you will meet it, and then you are going to be returned to the One who knows the seen and unseen world. We live in an anti-death culture. People get deluded into thinking if they are young, healthy, etc they won't die. If you mention death, you are called morbid. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) passed by a laughing gathering and remarked "Mix your gathering with remembrance of the destroyer of all pleasures". Reflections on death brings sobriety to frivolous conversations and gatherings.

Don't be in the Majalis of gafla "No hour in this life will you regret except the hour that you spent not remembering Allah". A hadith.

"Anyone who gets up from a gathering without remembering Allah is one who gets up from a dead carcass". Another hadith. As humans we are inclined to intimacy/socialising, and also we are created to worship Allah subhanahu wa t'ala, so we should mix our gatherings with Ibadah, and things of Importance to our Akhirah. Be content with what Allah has decreed for you. If you are in a state of death acceptance it won't bother you. "We are all on death row we are just waiting for the executioner to come". The one who condemned you to death, is the very one that gave you life.

Death should be a celebration for the Mu'umin. Sh. Ibn Al Habib said" in death there lies a thousand repose". As long as you are here, each cell in your body is exposed to pain, etc the minute you die its over. Death for a Mu'umin is like being bumped from third class to first class. For believers we are only allowed three days of mourning. The worst thing about this country is the industry of mourning, people who don't let go...end up in therapy, medication, etc. If your beloved dies, the believer knows it is the Qadar of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala. No people can deal with death with as much strength as Muslims. It is the divine connection.

Maurice Baucaille a French doctor said one of the things that interested him in Islam was seeing how the Algerians faced death in France, compared to the French. There are people who literally don't know how to die. A devout Muslim practices for death all his life. When it comes he is ready for it. Sh. Uthman Bashir Uthman, was in his early eighties. He grew up in Eritrea and a Sheikh saw him when he was young and told him "You will flee from this country because of fitna, and Allah will open the doors of Madina for you, where you live and die, and will be buried in Jannah Baqee'a." At that time he thought the Sh. was being nice...This is an example of Kashf where Allah gives certain people an opening to see things.

Sh. Uthman ended up in Madina, just like the man told him. He became sick with cancer and was being treated in Jeddah. One night, against Doctor's orders, he left to go back to Madina with his son. All the way there he recited the Kalimah. He died shortly after dawn, and was prayed upon the Rasul's Masjid after Jummah (he was the only Janaza that day). When they went to bury him, they found a spot near Sh. Malik Al Nafi which was already dug up. And they buried him there.

There's a story of Fareedudeen Al Ataar who used to sell perfume. A beggar came to him and asked him for money. Al Ataar told him to get a job. The beggar told him "the most important thing you'll ever do is die and I know how to die". He immediately said the Kalima and died! Al Attar made Tawbah and lead a righteous life after that.

It is a blessing to do dhikr of death. Think about dying, being washed, the angels, resurrection. If someone doesn't like death because he feels unprepared to meet Allah subhanahu wa t'ala, then it is not blameworthy. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said it's okay not to desire death, for a good person they need time to do more, and for a bad person, they need time to rectify. Dislike of death is at a cellular level. We feel the adrenaline rush that comes in near death situation that helps us save our lives and others. On the other hand, there are some who don't care what Allah does to them, they are pleased with His decree, this is not blameworthy either. Remember that disliking death will not distance you from it. The one who remembers death much is enabled by 3 things:

1. Qana'a: Contentment. If you really know you will die at anytime you will feel the impetus to enjoy life. "contentment is a treasure that's inexhaustible." The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "a qanoo; is the only wealthy person. A discontent rich man is in reality poor as to be rich is to be free of want. True wealth is the wealth of the soul. This is an age where so many false needs/wants are put in the heart (the media does a good job at this).

2. Energy in the heart to do more obedience.

3. A state where you'll hurry to do Tawbah. When you slip, you will be quick to rectify yourself.

The opposite is also true for one who is negligent of death:

1. The person will never be content.
2. They will always do wrong actions.
3. Won't have remorse when they do wrong.

Disease: Oblivion to Blessings

Shukr is essential to the deen of Islam. A kafir is an ingrate and even Muslims can be Kuffar (Kufrul Nai'ma).

The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) warned women of being ungrateful toward their spouses. Ayah "And there is no nai'ma that you have except from Allah". In this culture we are told to count our blessings "If you enumerate blessings of Allah you'll never encompass them". The Quran we begin "Bismillahi Al Rahmani Al Raheem"

Al Rahman: Giver of big blessings. Al Raheem: Giver of subtle blessings e.g the blessing just of the fact that our eyes have lubrication. People who don't have that, need to use drops, and know the pain of dryness of the eyes. The fact that we have sockets in our eyes for protection, the fact we blink and it cleanses our eyes. Balance is another na'ima, we can walk upright...

All the subconscious systems our respiratory system, digestive, etc. Our brain. Our very thumb..."We enobled Bani Adam". Our tastebuds, the fact that we enjoy a variation of food. Allah tells us in the Quran to look at our food. "We brought down the rain and split the earth".

The importance of gratitude can't be over estimated. Some ayas should strike fear in our hearts: "Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what's within themselves". Disobedience takes away your blessings. Al wakee was asked about his quick movements and he said "we guarded our limbs when we were young for Allah's sake and Allah guarded them for us in our old age". The keeping of na'ima is gratitude. Allah subhanahu wa t'ala has announced to us that He will give us more if we are grateful.

Istidraaj: That Allah will allow you to continue on with disobedience and increasing you in blessings until you think "Allah loves me". People think that difficulty is because Allah hates them, and blessings reflect Allah's love for them.

Na'ima can be divided into different categories:

1. True Na'ima: Things that benefit you in the short term and long term (dunya and Akhirah). e.g. Ilm and good character (husnul Khuluq).
2. Then we have Dharr/harms, things that harm us in the long and short term eg. ignorance and bad character.
3. Others are beneficial in the short term but harmful in the long term, such as feeding into our desires. Ignorant people think this is a good thing. A test was conducted where cookies were placed in front of children. When the child asked for a cookie he was told "you can either have one now or two later". Consistently the more intelligent children chose to have two later.
4. Things that are harmful in the short term but beneficial in the long term. Such as suppressing our desires.

Muslims are becoming short sighted because we left guidance. Intelligence stems from following the guidance of Allah. "We are a people that Allah gave us dignity with Islam if we look for dignity elsewhere Allah will humiliate us!" Umar bin Khattab (radhiallaahu anhu). Allah subhanahu wa t'ala gave kuffar temporary success in the dunya but long term failure.

There are two types of Na'ima:

1. Usoolil Na'ima: Roots of Na'ima- Health, imaan, islam etc.
2. Furoo'il Na'ima: Branches of Na'ima- This is the ornamented blessings, things you may want but not need.

The more Na'ima you have, the more hisaab you are going to be held up for. In this category it could be someone with a good face, or height (most leaders aside from Napoleon have height).

"If you send a messenger send one with a good face". Umar bin Khattab (radhiallaahu anhu), the wisdom is that hearts are inclined towards them. That's why most Prophets (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) have good faces. A man once prayed "Oh Allah I ask you for the completion of Na'ima!"

The Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) asked him "do you what it is?" the man said "No". The Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) replied "The completion of Na’ima is entering Jannah". Islam is the na’ima Allah subhanahu wa t'ala gave us. "Whoever wakes up in a healthy state, and safe in his possession, and has enough to get through the day is as if he has the whole world and what's in it!" A hadith. This is something that we take for granted but should be grateful for, everyday.

The sahaba told the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) "we realise we don't have much Na’ima to be accounted for". Allah sent Jibril (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) to ask "Do they wear sandals and drink cool water?" Even the fact that water is cool is something we should be grateful for. We could be drinking hot water.

Sayiddna Ali (radhiallaahu anhu) said "The most intelligent of people are those that do with out. The most stupid of people are the misers (as they don't get to enjoy their wealth in this world and will be punished in the Akhirah". The Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) used to live a balanced life but by modern standards he was living way below poverty level.

You can be wealthy and still be a zahid. That is if your heart is not attached to your wealth. If you lose your wealth you will not fall apart in despair. The Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) chose to be hungry one day and full the next, to break the attachment to this dunya.

Disease: Al Hazu'u (Derision or making fun of people)

Nowadays we have a whole industry of derision, caricatures, comedians etc. The cure for this is the same as the cure for arrogance as it is a type of kibr. Sayyidna Ali said "Don't belittle anyone because he may be a Wali of Allah". Even if you see someone vomiting and drunk you shouldn't look down upon them because you never know what their seal will be. Umar (radhiallaahu anhu) even when he was bowing to idols was still a beloved of Allah, because it was only a temporary state he was in. "Don't let one people mock another people lest they should be better than them". "Don't curse those who worship other than Allah, because they might curse Allah". e.g burning a U.S/Israeli flag, this might incite them to burn the Quran or a Saudi flag (With la illah Illa Allah written on it).

When the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) went into Makkah he walked in with his head bowed down, humbly. It's Mustahhab to make dua for your enemies to guidance, (it's not wajib), you can curse them too. But remember they are still humans and can be Muslim. Hind at the liver of Hamza (radhiallaahu anhu), it doesn't get any more barbaric than that! And she was still guided to Islam later on. Even Wahsh the man that killed Hamza became Muslim. People do things in war and they end up paying for it for the rest of their lives. More soldiers committed suicide later, than died in the Vietnam war! There is duas in the Quran cursing the oppressors, liars, etc. The Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said "One might read the Quran and it may be cursing him". Know that one's purpose to deride others is to humiliate them, and yet he is humiliating himself before Allah. He will be repayed by ignorance.

Next we will deal with a comprehensive plan for the treatment of the heart. This is the last disease.

If we look at the 7 deadly sins:

1. Pride
2. Anger
3. Envy
4. Sloth
5. Greed
6. Gluttony
7. Lust

We notice that he covered the first five but not gluttony and lust by themselves. He deals with Shahwa (gluttony and lust) as causes but not diseases in themselves. This is because these are both fitrah inclinations. Even in the Catholic tradition they are the last two, because they aren't considered as bad as the rest. Gluttony is fuel for lust. Imam Al Ghazali covers these two extensively in his book "Breaking the Two desires" by Abdul Hakim Winters (translation). This is an excellent book, that's highly recommended as an addition to this course. The point is to balance those two, control them, and not completely eliminate them.

General Treatment Plan for the diseases of the heart

The treatment plan that's comprehensive is to prohibit the self from what it desires coupled with hunger. Vigilance in the night, silence and Meditation. Prohibiting the self from what it desires, "None of you truly believes until his hawaa is in accordance with what I have brought" a hadith. This incorporates prohibiting the self until it no longer desires disobedience.

"The nafs is like an infant if you neglect it, it will grow loving to suckle and if you wean it, it won't want to". In Israel they did a study and discovered that there is an increase in IQ by 3 points for every month a baby was breastfed! Also the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "Beware of the wet nurse who is not intelligent, because she nourishes the brain". Halima (The Prophet's (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said wet nurse) was very eloquent, in the hadith she narrated she uses very difficult words, that ulamaa spent a lot of time on their commentary with.

The one who fears Allah and prevents his self from doing what it desires acquires self discipline. In this culture all the self help books are for people who can't control themselves. We have prayer, fasting, cleanliness, and all these are related to learning how to discipline ourselves.

The way to do that is:

1. Hunger

The stomach is the key impulse for most people. One of the Salafi said "For me to raise my hand from the plate while I am still hungry, is better than staying up all night in prayer". Some people get really mad when they don't get their food fast enough. The infantile nafs- A baby cries for food and the minute it gets the breast it goes into this state of relaxation. It's the same reaction with people who are controlled by their stomach. You will not die if you miss a meal! The early Shuyukh focused on hunger more than anything else.

A man who from Yemen from the Banu Hanifa tribe came to the Prophet's (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) house and the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) offered him a bowl of milk. The man drank it, and the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) offered more, and the man drank it, until he drank a full seven bowls. The next day, he became Muslim, and when he was offered a bowl of milk, he only drank one, to the surprise of the Sahaba around him. So they asked the

Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) what caused the change and the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) replied "The Kafir eats from seven intestines, while the believer eats from only one".

People eat a lot more meat nowadays than ever before. People used to eat it only once a week, and sometimes only during Eid days! In the modern culture people are like animals they literally graze. People snack all the time, and convenience stores are around every corner. The average American has twenty food contacts a day! People are encouraged to eat smaller meals throughout the day. But traditionally there are set times for meals, and there was discipline.

In the American army there now hot food, they put water in it, and the food heats up. There is no fortitude whatsoever, for every man in the field he needs at least 17 to back him up. The Muslims can deal with shortage, just because of fasting. It's sad though, because Ramadhan has become a feast for some people, all night long. There's more barakah in eating food together from one plate.

Sh. Khatri when he returned to Mauritania from abroad was asked what was the most surprising thing he noticed and he said he was shocked that people ate from separate plates! The Mauritians couldn't even grasp that idea...what do you mean separate plates? He said many a time he was embarassed because they put a big plate and he would start eating from it, and people would come with their smaller plates. If the food is nutritious then you need less of it, junk food makes you eat more.

2. Vigilance in the Night

To bring the heart to life give the night sometime even if it is just two Rakaats. In this age where its harder to get up, its better to get up even 5 minutes before fajr consistently then to try and do an hour one day and then skip a couple of days.

When the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) went to Madina he gave a Khutba in Masjid Quba "Give greeting (spread peace), feed people, and pray at night when others are asleep and you will enter Jannah". Very simple advice, if we were all to follow it, we would be in a much better place.

We have to be careful though, there was a woman who used to pray at night, give sadaqa, etc but she was mean to her neighbors and the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said "she is in hell".

Tahajjud is a big thing, and Allah has encouraged that for His believers. It is good to have a steady practice. It is also good to do the shorter surahs with great rewards, to try and get as much rewards as possible.

If you practice every night, and you wake up late one night, it's okay to do your prayers before you pray fajr (as long as it doesn't make you late for fajr).

If women can't pray it is acceptable to do dhikr, read beneficial books, meditate, duas etc. The Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) remarked on Abdullah bin Umar (radhiallaahu anhu), "what an excellent man would that he prayed at night". It doesn't mean he would be an excellent man if he prayed. It means he is a good man, and how much better would he be if he prayed. When Abdullah heard that, he never left night prayers from that day on.

Aisha (radhiallaahu anha) said "The Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) prayed so much until his feet cracked and were swollen." She asked him "why do you do this and Allah has forgiven you all your past and future sins?" the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) replied "Should I not be a grateful servant?"

"Whoever seeks high things will spend his nights awake". The best time is to divide the night into six parts from Maghrib to Fajr and the last sixth is the best time to get up and pray Qiyam. So if Maghrib is at 6pm and fajr at 6am, the best time would be 4-6am.

Any time after Isha is considered Qiyam. Those with a heavy liver is harder for them to get up after they fall asleep, so it is okay to pray before they go to bed. It's actually easier to wake up at 4am because the sleep right before fajr is the heaviest. The hikma is that Allah wants us to wake up when it is difficult to break out of sleep.

Ten Rakaahs is considered best. It's actually better to do witr right after Isha unless you are very consistent in waking up. Sayidna Abu Bakr (radhiallaahu anhu), although he woke up, he still preferred to pray witr before going to bed.

The best thing to do is to sleep and then wake up, because it is harder, (Mujahadah).

The Shaytaan binds three knots in the back of our heads at night and whispers "you have a long night ahead of you". If you wake up and say dua, the first knot is untied. If you do wudhu, the second is untied. If you pray the third is untied and you are freed from the binding of shaytaan.

The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "If you sleep all night shaytaan urinates in your ear". Some Ulama take that to be literal (we are warned not to make the literal into metaphoric unless it is necessary). Some say it mainly means shaytaan prevents us from doing good at night.

May Allah give us Tawfiq to keep vigilance for Him at night (Amin).

The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) used to read the last part of Suratul Imran when he woke up at night (from ayah 190- to the end). Murattul Hajj used to wake up 4-5 hours before fajr!

The thing that prevents us from waking up for Qiyaam is our sins. Waking up is a gift from Allah, and our sins take that away from us.

One righteous man was deprived of Qiyam for 40 days for saying something about someone he shouldn't have.

Witr should preferably be the last prayer, but if you aren't sure you are going to wake up, it's better to do it right after Isha before going to bed.

Sh. Habeeb "Go the path of ease with yourself in order for you to move along with yearning. Two Rakaats performed by a lover is better than 100 done without love. It should all come from yearning for Allah's pleasure".

Silence

The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "Whoever was given silence is given much wisdom". Imam Shafi said when he was in a gathering and needed to say something he would

first look into himself and determine what his intention was if it was to show off, he didn't say anything.

Imam Shafi said that he never had a debate with someone without praying that the truth will be manifested on the tongue of his oponent, so that he would submit to it. Subhana Allah!

The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) didn't like chatterboxes. Imam Malik said of his student "he is a good man, except he speaks a month worth of talking in a day".

Meditation

It's a good practice. There are different ways to meditate: we can reflect upon Qiyama, or the Divine names of Allah and His attributes, upon our blessings, our death, our life.

Keeping the Company of Good people

Imam ibn AtAllah said "don't take as a company someone whose state does not elevate you and whose speech does not guide you to Allah subhanahu wa t'ala." A good person can help change your focus even when you are gloomy to be more grateful to Allah.

Sidi Abul Hassan said "Whoever tells you to go to the world has cheated you...." One thing we have to remember is that we will die anytime. If you have a salesman who offers you two houses. One, he tells you is temporary, it can vanish at any time. The other is permanent, beautiful but is more expensive. Which one would you choose to invest in? The Akhirah is bought by saving your soul.

Abul Hasan continued "And the one who tells you to do a lot of good deeds has exhausted you, but the one who indicates the contentment of Allah has guided you". To finally take refuge in the one to Whom all affairs are returned to.

The only real cure to these diseases is going to Allah with complete submission and plea with Him to change your condition.

Teach the ignorant one to guidance.

You have to be like someone who is drowning or one in a barren desert with no other recourse but Allah.

Ikrimah bin Abi Jahl said his guidance came on a boat. He was with some Habashi Christians, and waves were rocking the boat. So Ikrimah called to his idols for help. The Habashi laughed at him "You are calling an idol all the way in Makkah to help you here at sea?" Ikrimah realised the foolishness of that, and Tawheed entered his heart at that moment. He realised only Allah could help him.

Actions that purify the heart

None is more beneficial than that which is consistent even if it is slight. Take the example of two rusty coins. On one you scrub it vigorously once then put it to the side, on the other you consistently scrub it lightly for a long time. The second one will become brighter and shinier and stay like that with time. The first will eventually rust again.

The proof of this is that the Sahaba were consistent even in the Nafila.

If we use the example of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam), and the fact that he sometimes fasted, and sometimes didn't, sometimes woke up at night and sometimes didn't etc. we have to remember that he (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) is a universal Messenger. In him everyone could find an example. He encompasses every good in all believers.

The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) understood that everyone has been given a different opening, for some its waking up at night, for others its reading Quran, for others its fasting, etc. That's why there are more than one door to Jannah. Abu Bakr (radhiallaahu anhu), asked if anyone would be able to enter all the doors of Jannah, and the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said yes, and he hoped Abu Bakr (radhiallaahu anhu), will be one of them.

Imam Malik used to wear nice clothes. He liked musk, and was always dressed nicely, and surrounded by a lot of people because he taught a lot. One Zahid looked at him and wrote him a letter, chastising him for being around people and wearing nice clothes. Then Imam Malik wrote

a nice letter back to him, telling him that Allah has opened many doors of righteousness, some people have fasting, some sadaqa, etc. He said "I am pleased with what Allah has given me, and I don't think I am less than you".

You should follow what Allah has facilitated for you. Include actions that are done in the absence of others secret charity, prayer etc.

Fudhayl was walking and a man commented to another "there's someone who prays all night long". Fudhayl heard this and thought "I don't remember any night that I spent all of it in prayer" he began weeping "how great Allah subhanahu wa t'ala is to veil me and make the man think I am better than what I really am!"

Actions done based on the love of Allah are the highest ones. The one who is free of want from dunya and even tamaa of Al Akhirah, and reserves the best and highest for Allah earns His pleasure. Zuhd is really lack of want.

The actions of those who strive out of hope are better than one who is compelled by fear. Actions that extend to others are also better eg. teaching, sadaqa, planting a tree, feeding an animal etc. Fasting is good to abstain from desires. Sadaqa for a miser is better for the heart. "The best Sadaqa is when you are sound in mind and body, and you are in fear of poverty" Said the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). Youth spent in avoiding wrong actions is better. Tawbah becomes easier when you are older. Some Muslims spend their youth doing wrong, and when they get older become righteous and start pointing fingers at others.

Allah subhanahu wa t'ala loves the obedient youth. The definition of youth is about 15-35 some say 15-40. Anything done with discretion and concealment is good for the heart.

The worst things are those that harden the heart and the nafs likes, and that you are constant in. Speaking a lot without mentioning Allah subhanahu wa t'ala hardens the heart. The more the tongue remembers Allah the softer the heart gets.

A wrong action that leads to shame and impoverishment before Allah is better than obedience

and feeling kibr before Allah subhanahu wa t'ala. The wisdom of wrong actions is to give us humility.

The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) "if it wasn't for wrong actions I would have feared worse which is ujub". Ahmad Zarruq said "The good of Ta'a is in the essence of Ta'a"...if the secondary result of good is pride, and the result of Ma'siya is tawbah then at the very end the Ma'siya brings you closer to Allah. Although this is not saying disobedience is a good thing. e.g some people rob and kill and end up in jail, where they receive guidance.

An atom's weight of praiseworthy action from the heart is better than mountains of actions that are simply outer. Leaving one penny/farthing of a haraam is better than 70 hajjs.

There are four things that even the best of them have some abasement in it:

1. Debt even a farthing/penny.
- b. A daughter as she is vulnerable in society and needs protection.
- c. Asking a question even if its directions.
- d. Being alone even for a night.

The comprehensive ideology is love of this temporary world (there is a difference of opinion some say it is desire, which is the root of all diseases).

Ibn AtAllah thought the source of diseases is self satisfaction. It is better to keep the company of an ignorant man that is dissatisfied with himself than that of a learned man that is satisfied with himself. The reason for every good character is lack of self satisfaction.

Zarruq said the three signs of being content with the self are:

1. Seeing the Haqq for the self:

In this culture we have a bill of rights but not a bill of responsibilities. In Islam we focus more on responsibilities because Allah has rights over us. Taqwa is Allah's right.

There are people who always see others as against them "I have a right!" There was an alim who went to a self satisfied Sheikh he didn't like very much and said "The least of my students is better than you!" The Shaikh said "why?" The alim said "Come to my madrassa tomorrow and I'll show you why." He then told his students when the Shaikh comes in and gives you salaam don't say salaam back. And then he also said when another student comes in and says salaam do not say salaam back.

The Sheikh came in and said "Assalamu Alaykum" and no one responded. He said it a couple of times loudly and no one responded. He got billigerant and angry and said "These are your students? They are ignorant. Don't they know that Allah's subhanahu wa t'ala Message that said if you are given salaam you should reply with something that's better!" .Then a little while later a late student came in. He said salaam and no one responded and said salaam again and no one responded. Immediately he became humble and said "I am sorry if I haven't fulfilled one of your huquq. Please forgive me" The student's attitude was to immediately look at himself and humble himself in that situation "what did I do?" the Sheikh's attitude was "this is my right!"

2. Ignoring the faults of self by deeming the self above impurity or by interpreting the faults to sound good.

3. Having compassion for the self and complaining.

The 3 signs of discontentment are:

1. He is always checking himself and accusing the self.

2. Careful of the blemishes of the soul.

3. Forcing the self to do difficult things. Eating less, praying more, engaging in Mujahada.

Abu Uthman said "Whoever sees anything good about his self hasn't seen the faults of his soul".

This attitude is antithetical to the west which is always talking about feeling good. It's not about self loathing but more importantly about striving for constant self improvement.

Mastery is only achieved by consistent improvement. The minute you stop, then that's the most you'll grow. When a man is dissatisfied he seeks more good and is vigilant against evil.

Miftah is key in Arabic. The root word for Miftah is Fataha. Miftah is a tool you use to open something up, it causes an opening which is different from unlocking. Miftah is also related to one of Allah's names Al- Fatah. There's a hadith that states sabr is the key for Faraj (opening/ease). Part of patience is not complaining.

The Doors of Knowledge: The key to prayer is wudhu (if you are heedless of your wudhu and cleanliness you will be heedless of your prayer). Wudhu is spiritual preparation for Prayer.

Key to Hajj is Ihram; The Key to righteousness is charity; The key to Jannah is Tawhid; Every key has teeth (asnan) and these keys branch out to other; The key to ilm/knowledge is asking intelligent questions and learning to listen attentively; The key to gaining is patience. With patience you will gain whatever you desire, with Taqwa you can bend even iron!; The key to increase of good in dunya and akhirah is gratitude.

The key to Wilaya is love and remembrance of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala.

The key to Tawfiq (your will in accordance to Allah) is understanding what you should naturally incline to or avert to (Rahba and Raghba).

The key to getting a response from Allah subhanahu wa t'ala is Dua (calling/supplicating to Allah).

The key to entering into the presence of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala is the heart entering into submission and sincerity in what you love and hate (all should be for the sake of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala).

The key to life of the hearts is reflecting on the meaning of the Quran and calling onto Allah with sincerity before dawn and leaving bad deeds/wrong actions.

The key to gaining mercy from Allah subhanahu wa t'ala is doing ibadah properly and striving to help out creation.

"Show Mercy to those on earth and Allah will have mercy on you".

The key to provision is to go out and get it but do a lot of istighfar (the nature of going out into the dunya is acquiring dhunub/sins).

The key to dignity is obedience to Allah subhanahu wa t'ala.

The key to getting ready for akhirah is having short hopes.

The key to all good is desire of akhirah the key to all evil is desire for dunya.

Sheikh Al Khatri spoke for the last part of the tape:

The root of diseases is a human being being self satisfied. That human will not be able to acquire good as long as he is content with the self. The origin of good is knowing your self. If you really know yourself you won't be content with it and you'll be motivated to do good. If you are self satisfied you deem wrong actions to be good. So the nature of your hawaa is that it inclines towards Ma'siya (wrong doing) and if you aren't careful of your soul it will convince you that bad deeds are good. (e.g this culture). The soul when it is not satisfied will seek what's good (what Allah says is good not the aql or self). The Shariah tells us what is good and bad and intellect has no access to that. The aql/intellect is a limited source of guidance. Shariah recognises what's good. The nafs looks to what Allah tells it to do for guidance.

The origin of those two (disease and treatment) is the company he keeps. "A man is of the deen of his companions". If you keep company of one who does wrong it will affect you. People have to look at who he keeps company of e.g if you sit at the door of the bar you will smell the foul odour of the alcohol. If you are sitting at the door of the perfumer you will smell the incense. Whatever you keep proximity of affects you (good and bad). Luqman said to his son

keep the company of Ulama those who act upon their knowledge they are like rain to the earth of your heart without even you being aware of it. Iman will increase as a result.

The sitting with the alim will take you from six states that are bad to six that are good:

1. From doubt to certainty (shaqq ila yaqeen).
2. From riyaa to sincerity
3. From heedlessness to remembrance
4. From desire of dunya to desire of akhirah.
5. From arrogance to humility
6. From a bad internal nature to a good character with good intentions.

Don't keep the company of one whose state does not elevate you or speech does not direct you to Allah.

Of all these diseases the comprehensive treatment is remembrance of Allah (dhikr). The highest dhikr is recitation of the Quran, praying, saying Subhana Allah, Laillaha Illa Allah, Alhamdulillah, etc. All the duas of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam).

A person in a constant state of dhikr will have a pure heart.

Sidi Ahmad Ibn Hanbal saw Allah in his dreams 99 times! In one of those times he asked Allah "Of all the things we do, which one draws your servant closest to you?" Allah replied "Reading the Quran". Ibn Hanbal asked "with or without understanding?" Allah said "It doesn't matter. Even if one doesn't understand the Quran, if he reads it that action would draw him closer to Allah". In Sahih Al Bukhari the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "The likeness of one who remembers Allah and one who doesn't is like the living and the dead".

In another hadith he (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam), said "Make remembrance of Allah until people say his is a madman". Someone talking to himself is considered crazy, so make dhikr until people who are looking at you think you are crazy (be consistent).

In another Hadith, he (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said "Should I not tell you what the best of your action is? And the purest in front of your Lord? And the most exalted in all of the deeds in degree? And better for you than spending in gold and silver? And better than Jihad where you they kill you and you kill them?" The sahaba eagerly said "yes!" "Remembrance of Allah".

Dhikr of Allah is the end, where as every Ibadah is a means to that end.

Allah says "remember me and I'll remember you".

Dhikr is not the same as other forms of worship, because it can encompass all human acts, and is not limited by time. The one who always is in a state of remembrance, an affliction will never touch him and he will die a Shahid. Medicine for the soul is dhikr. When you want to do dhikr start with Istighfaar (to remove the wrong actions) and after that Pray on the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) (it acts as a Murabbi, for cleansing the soul). The only dhikr that is definitely accepted is Salaat Ala Nabi (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) Allah commands where He himself begins with it "Allah and His angels pray on the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), Oh believers pray on the Messenger and say Tasleem". So whoever prays on the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) one time, Allah prays for him ten times. In a hadith the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) "Prayer for me is the light of the heart, the grave and on the siraat". Every time you do it start with the ayah. The one who prays on the Nabii should keep in mind that it is Mandub, to have wudhu, face the Qiblah and do siwaak. Also have the presence of the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) in mind. These are the same courtesies of prayer. Every dhikr has things appropriate for that dhikr eg saying "Laillaha Illa Allah" you negate shirk. Alhamdullillah reminds us of the blessings of Allah.

Lahawla Wala Quwatta Illa billah, reminds us to completely disengage ourselves from any power/strength except for Allah.

When you pray on the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), you should bring the presence of the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) in front of you, and all the wonderful things he has done. You are participating on something that even Allah and His angels do.

Another thing to avoid in dhikr is Lahn (incorrect Pronunciation). Try to learn to say things properly. Some mis pronunciations can take you outside the pale of Islam. People who really can't pronounce something after they have tried really hard, are excused.

One of the greatest forms of worship is meditating on the creation of Allah. Allah makes mention of people who remember Him standing, sitting, and reclining, those who reflect on His creation.

Action of the heart (tafakkur) is better than all the actions of the limbs.

To reflect on one moment is better than a year of Ibaadah.

The signs of reflection are in 4 directions:

1. Reflection on the Signs of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala, reflecting on Allah's subhanahu wa t'ala creation leads to love of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala in the heart.
2. Reflection on the promise of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala in terms of rewards this leads to a desire of Akhirah (Al Raghba)
3. Reflection on the punishment of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala this leads to fear (Rahba) of disobedience to Allah.
4. Reflections on the harshness of self towards Allah subhanahu wa t'ala despite Allah's consistent Ihsan towards us. This leads to shame in front of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala, having hayaa, and gratitude.

The heart is the thing that differentiates between good and evil. The heart has these khawatir/insinuations.

Q and A session

People who are Mutassawifa that is people who claim to be Sufis, who do a lot of dhikr but ignore the wajib, what about them?

First a human has to learn Fardh Ayn. He will go astray without it. The great Imams all say before Tassawuf there has to be Fiqh or you will deviate. Even showing filial piety towards parents has to be superseded by learning the Fardh ayn, this will take about a year of serious study.

What about women who are menstruating?

Women who are menstruating can't read from the Quran. If she memorises some verses and needs to maintain what she has memorised (from memory) then its okay. She can do anything as far as dhikr, Dua, Istighfaar, etc

What about people who are guided to true Islam through sufism?

People are guided by Allah subhanahu wa t'ala first and foremost. We worship Allah subhanahu wa t'ala by His ahkaam, tawheed, prayers, (methology of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam)). Pseudo spirituality claims that you can have Haqeeqah without Shariah and that is anti Spirituality in reality. The fruit is protected by the shell. You can't get spiritual without the Shariah, you will be filled with the diseases of the heart.

If you have done things wrong should you tell people about it?

If you have done something wrong, veil it and ask for Allah's forgivenss. But if you commit it openly, then this will lead to worse tribulation. A man came to the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and confessed "I have commited Zina, punish me" The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) turned away from him. The man insisted, so the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said "Didn't you just pray with us?", "whoever does wrong and says istighfaar and covers it Allah will forgive him, but if he confesses then we have to punish him".

Companionship in terms of dunya is to always be with someone either lower than you or the same (in terms of wealth). If you hang out with rich people you will begin to desire their wealth. In terms of spirituality always hang out with someone who is higher than you in station. People of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala tend to look at themselves as lower than everyone else, this will teach you humility. Don't belittle anyone because they might be the wali of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala.

Imam Malik said "Who are the people of Biddah?" "Anyone who calls himself other than Muslim is Ahl Bidaah". To say you are Hanafi, Maliki, etc is not wrong, because according to Ahlus Sunnal Wal Jamaah, the 4 imams are absolutely by consensus rightly guided. Anyone who asks about the hazy things in the Quran is deviated.

In age where shuyukh are dying what should do?

Take a simple aqeedah and learn. Even women can go to places like Mauritania, if your himma is strong enough.

Anyone who calls people to Islam and doesn't know the fundamentals is not a true Dayeeah. We should learn the basics and then invite people through that first.

Treatment with Remembrance

No better treatment than dhikr.

If we get ill, then we treat ourselves with dhikr and sometimes we abandon and have relapse.

Man wanted to get in to see Umar, and the man's cousin got in and said "Ya Umar give me what Allah because you are someone who hasn't given out much, and is unjust". Umar was mad and the cousin reminded to remember what Allah told him 'to forgive ignorance' and Umar immediately let go.

Do a lot of dhikr, only people who will benefit Allah's Messenger are people who remember Allah subhanahu wa t'ala.

Tazkiya means to grow. Spiritual work that you do is dependent on dhikr of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala.

Sayyidna Umar wrote to his people “I consider prayer to be most importance, and who is vigilant guarded his deen, and whoever is negligent he is negligent about everything else”.

Know the ahkaam of the prayer.

People who stay up all night doing dhikr then miss fajr prayer. It is a waste.

Prayer is conditional on wudhu and tahara.

The best remembrance is to remember Allah at His limits.

The best dhikr is Quran, recite with reflection.

The only time the Quran is not the best dhikr is when other dhikr is preferred e.g. after fajr do the dhikr of Sabah (morning remembrance).

Begin with Istighfaar. Then prayer of Prophet, then Tahlil.

Then Ikhlāas and Muawadhithayn. (Surah Ikhlāas, Surah Naas, Surah Falaq three times).

Adab of prayer and guard yourself from lahn (mispronunciation).

Do wudhu and Qibla (but this is only mandub). You don't have to if you can't. No one protects his wudhu except a Mu'umin.

To recite from Mushaf is more reward than (listen or memorize) because eye, ear, the hands, all get the rewards.

Some shuyukh haven't touched a mushaf in 30 years.

Prohibition of the printing of the Quran was instituted by Ottoman empire for 400 years. They considered it sacreligious to beat the letters into the paper.

Because there are so many Quran's today people have no respect for it.

Beware of bad pronunciation because you can actually say something haraam as a result. Unless you really cannot help it.

The ulama considered lahn (mispronunciation) a prohibition and it is like one who worships Allah through disobedience.

The best of ibadah is Tafakkur (reflection) and the highest state is Fanaa (extinction). This comes from the idea that the nafs experiences separation from itself. Newborns have no concept of it. As a child grows it comes into its identity and sees itself as an individual.

Different States:

1. Haal: When someone is overcome with a spiritual state that is uncontrollable.

2. Maqam: Fixed in a state (higher than haal because of its constancy). For example the Maqam of tawbah is not wanting to do wrong, while the haal of tawbah is when you do wrong and suddenly you feel bad about it.

3. Warid: In rush that comes into the heart and floods it with light. This is temporary.

4. Fanaa: highest- when the self is no longer aware of itself. Loss of the experience of the self. It doesn't last and if it does, it becomes insanity.

Spiritual psychosis: is a real concept. Some people go into meditation and lose their mind because they don't have the protection of wudhu, salat, etc. Islam is grounding. It is not about getting a spiritual high.

New age spiritualists have experiences but can't distinguish between satanic, nafs, and angelic experiences.

The idea of fanaa is the person who does dhikr is no longer aware of self. Sayyidna Ali's other son (not Hassan or Hussein), was struck by an arrow. His companions waited until he was praying to take it out, because he wouldn't feel the pain. Other people (spiritualists) have incredible experiences that are spiritual. So this concept is not just particular to Islam. We don't believe in the idea of Hulul (incarnation). The human being though can be in a state of absolute witnessing where they see Allah subhanahu wa t'ala in all of His creation. That's why for a mu'umin everything good and bad is from Allah subhanahu wa t'ala.

Adhkaarul Sabah wal Masaa (Morning and Evening Remembrances).

These adhkaar are formulations and there are different ones out there. Focus on the ones that the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) before doing from various scholars.

Shaytaan's foremost task is to get you away from dhikr and if he can't do that he will get you away from the Quran and Sunnah.

Dhikr

Always start with Bismillahi Rahmani Rahim. Whatever action that is done without the name of Allah is cut off from Barakah.

Ikhlaas 3 times (Surah Ikhlaas is equivalent in weight and meaning to a 1/3 of the Quran).
Muawadhatayn (Nas and Alaq 3 times)

Rabi Inni Audhu Bika Min Hamazatil Shayateen Waudhu Rabi and Yuhdharoon 3 times.

(I seek refuge in Allah from the whispering and insinuation of Shaytaan and I seek refuge from their presence)

One of the signs of time is that insinuations and whisperings will increase. People's minds are filled with clutter. The TV is on, or music, bill boards, etc. It is all from shaytaan. By indulging we are giving shaytaan the ticket to whisper and give us visual images that destroy our souls.

Majority of sports have awrah and we shouldn't watch. We need to disengage ourselves from useless entertainment, wean ourselves from the dunya.

Afahasibtum annama Khalaqnakum abathan waanakum ilayna la trujaoon, Fala Allahu Malikul Haqqu, Lailaha Illa Huwa Rabbul Arshil Kareem.

(Do you think we created you in vain and to us you wouldn't return? Exalted is Allah, the King, the Truth, There is no God but He, the Lord of the Noble Throne)

Waman Yadu maa llahi illahan akharan la burhana lahu bihi fainna hisabuhu maa rabbihi inn Allaha la yuflihul Kafiroom

And He who worships with God there is no proof on him, and his account is with Allah, verily Allah will not grant success to the Disbelievers

Wa Qul Rabbi, Ighfir Warham waanta Khayrul Rahimeen.

Say My Lord forgive and have Mercy for you are the best of those who show Mercy.

Fasubhana Allahi Hina Tumsoon wa Hina Tusbihoon, Walahul Hamdu Fisamawati Wal Ardhi Wa ashiyan Wahina Tudh-hiroon.

Glory be to Allah when you come into the evening and when you come into the morning, and He has praise in the heavens and earth and in the evening and at Dhuhr time.

Yukhrijul Hayaa Minal Mayyiti Wa Yukhrijul Mayyiti Minal Hayya

He brings the living from the dead and the dead from the living (this could refer to the heart too).

Audhu Billahi Samiul Aleem minal Shaytanil Rajeem

I seek refuge in Allah the all Hearing the All Knowing from the Accursed Satan.

Read the last 4 ayahs of Suratul Hashr.

A poet once said: How wondrous is it that a man can disobey or disbelieve in Allah, while in every movement, and stillness and always there is a witness. Everything in creation is a sign that testifies He is One.

Attributes are only approximations for humans to understand in our limited scope due to time and space constraints who Allah is. The sunnah is like the ark of Noah for the flood of Bidaah, Kufr and all the other vices. Sayyidna Malik said.

Some duas to do every day:

"Audhu Bikalimatti Ilahi Tammati min sharri ma khalaq" (three times)
"I seek refuge in all the complete names of Allah from the evil of His creation". Whoever says this in the morning/evening will not be afflicted by any harm.

"Bismillahi Alladhi laa yadhurru maa ismihi shay'an fil ardhi wala fisamai wahuwal samiul alim".

"In the name of Allah the one who does not harm anything in the earths and heavens and He is the All Hearing the Knower"

Saying this will protect you from harm by poison, animals, creation. There was an anecdote

about this dua. Where Khalid bin Walid told some Christians that nothing can harm him without the will of Allah. The Christians dared him to take poison. He said this dua and took it, and wasn't hurt. CAUTION: Do NOT try this at home, our imaan levels are no where near that of the likes of Khalid bin Walid.

"Allahuma ini Asbahtu minka binimatin, waafiyattin, wasitrin, faitimma nimatika aaliyya, waafyatika, wasitrika, fil dunya wal Akhirah" (three times)

Oh Allah I have wakened in blessings, health, and covering (from my misdeeds), so complete my blessings, health and covering in this world and the next. Whoever says this has completed his gratitude.

"Allahuma ini Asbahtu ash-hiduka, wa-ashhidu hamalata arshika, wamalaikatak, wa jamiu khalqika annaka Allahu laillaha Illa anta, Wa anna Muhammadan abduka Warasuluka" (4 times)

"Oh Allah I come into the morning calling You to bear witness and the angels that bear your throne, and all your angels and all of your creation that You are Allah without partner and Muhammad (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). is Your servant and Messenger". Releases a man from bondage to anything but Allah.

"Alhamdulillah rabil Alameen Hamdan yuwafi nimatahu wa kufi mazida" (3 times)

"I praise Allah for the Lord of the Worlds A praise that is appropriate for all His blessings and also recompenses the increase He gives us.

"Amantu billahil Adheem, wakafartu bil Jibti, wal taghuti, wastamsaktu bil urwatil wuthqaa lanfinsama laha, Wallahu Samiun alim"

I believe in Allah the Great, and I have disbelieved in magic, and association with Allah, and I have held on to the firmest handle, this handle will never break off, and Allah is the All Hearing, All Knowing". Saying this removes all shirk and is a protective dua.

"Radhaitu billahi Rabban Wabil Islami deenan wabi Muhammadin (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) nabiyyan warasulan".

"I am content with Allah as my Lord, Islaam as my deen, and Muhammad (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) is the Messenger and Prophet".

Hasbiya Allahu Laa illaha illa Huwa alaihi tawakaltu wahuwa rabbul Arshil adheem”
I put my trust in Allah the Lord of the Magnificent Throne

"Allahuma Sali Alaa Muhammad waala alihi Waashabihi Wassalim".

(Prayers on the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam))

Jibril (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) gave the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) glad tidings that whoever says prayers on him, Allah says it on the person 10 times. (It is recommended to do at least 100 in the morning and 100 in the evening.) Uthmaan da Fodio, did prayers on the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) at least 5000 times daily! Imam Al Jazuli for 14 years in a row, finished the Quran once a day, said Bismillahi Rahmanil Raheem 114,000 times daily while he was in seclusion. When he came out people made tawbah just by seeing his state! This Imam memorized a difficult Maliki fiqh book. He stayed in the room for so long, people convinced his father to go look as maybe he had some hidden treasures in there. His dad went to check on him and saw all over the walls the word "Maut"/death written. The dad then realised his son was in a different station all together. Subhana Allah.

"Allahuma inni Asaluka min fujaatil khayri, wa adhubika min fujaatil Sharri".

"Oh Allah I seek good surprises and I take refuge from bad surprises!".

"Allahuma Anta Rabi laa illaha illa anta. Khalaqtani wa ana abduka. Wa ana ala ahdika wa wadika mas tatatu. Audhu bika min shari ma khalaqtu, a boou bika binimatikka alayya, faghfirli fainnahu laa yaghfirul dhunooba illa anta." (3 times)

"Oh Allah You are my Lord, there is no God but You, You created me and I'm your servant, and I am under your covenant and your promise as best as I am able to. I seek refuge in you from the evil i have perpetrated. I return in admittance that all my blessings are from you. I take full responsibility for my sins. So forgive me, for you are the only one who can forgive my sins".

This is called the master of Istighfar - the best way to seek forgiveness.

"MashaAllahu Kana wamalam yashaa lam yakun. Walahawla wala quwaata illa billahi aliyil adheem".

"Whatever Allah wills will happen and whatever He doesn't will not. There is no power except from Allah, the Most High, The most Gracious".

Good to recite during calamities.

"Alamu ana Allaha ala kulli shayin qadeer, waanna Allaha Ahadta ala kulli shayin Ilman, Allahuma ini Aduhubika min sharri nafsi, wamin sharri kulli dabbatin, anta akhidhun binasiyatiha. inna rabi ala siratil Mustaqeem."(3 times)

"I know that Allah is powerful over all things. And He encompasses over all things in knoweldge. Oh Allah I seek refuge in you from the evil of my soul and the evil of every creation that you have taken by the Forelock, my Lord is on the straight path"

"Yahayyu ya Qayyum birahmatika astaghith, wamin adhabika astajir, aslihi shaani kullahu wala takilni ila nafsi wala ahadin min khalqika tarafata aynin"

"I am seeking succor of your Mercy and I am seeking respite from your torment, rectify all my affairs, and do not leave me to my soul or anyone from your creation for a blink of an eye!"

This doesn't mean that you won't get help from others, but you will see it from Allah.

"Allahuma ini audhubika minal hammi walhuzni, waminal ajzi wal kasli, waminal jubni wal bukhl, wamni ghalabatil dayni wa qahratul rijal.:

"Oh Allah I seek refuge in your from the grief (of my past), or anxiety (of the future), from incapacity or laziness, from cowardice (of self) or miserliness, and from overpowering debt and oppression of man"

Debt is how the kuffar go over the Muslims. It is through debt that they could begin to ask for

concessions. This whole country is designed to get people in debt. Economic slavery! When you are in debt you are weak and bound to be guilty. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) told us to beware of debt and kufr. The fact that it is put with kufr shows how bad it is.

"Allahuma inni asalukal afwa, wal afiya, wal muafatal daima, fi deeni, wadunyaya, wa ahli, wamali. Allahuma istir awrati, waamin rawati. Allahuma ihfadhni min bayni yaddaya, wamin khalfi, waaudhu bi adhmatika an ughtala min tahti".

"Oh Allah I seek I am asking for forgiveness and health in my deen, world, family, and wealth. Oh Allah cover my misdeeds and nakedness, secure me from fear, protect me in between my hands, my back, from above me, and from assassination by trickery from under me."

"Allahuma anta khalaqtani waanta tut'imni, waanta tasqini, waanta tumituni, waanta tuhyini".

"Oh Allah you have created me, and you guide me and it is You who feeds me and quenches my thirst and you cause me to die and to live".

"Asbahna ala fitratil Islam wala Kalimatul Ikhlâas, wala deeni nabiyyana Muhammad (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). wa ala millati abeen Ibraheema hanifan Musliman wama kana minal Mushrikeen".

"We have awoken into the Fitra of Islam, and the pure word, and on the deen of our Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and on the path of our father Ibraheem (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and he was inclining towards truth, submission in Islam and not amongst the polytheist".

"Allahuma bika asbahna wa bika amsaina, wabika nahya wabika namut wailaika nushur"

"Oh Allah through you we awaken, and by you we come into life, and through you we die, and to you is our Ressurrection".

"Allahuma ini as aluka khayra hadhal yamu wakhayra ma baadahu, waaudhubika min shari hadhal yaumu, wamin sharri maa badahu"

"Oh Allah I ask the goodness of this day and the goodness of whats after it, and I seek refuge in you from the evil of this day and whats after it"

"Allahuma maa asbaha bi min nimatin aw bi ahadin min khalqika faminka wahdaka laa sharika laka, falakal hamd walakal shukr"

"Oh Allah there is no blessing that has come on me this morning, or any of your creation except from you there is no partner with you, so to You goes my gratitude and my praises".

I want to take a moment and say its very hard to write Arabic in English. MashaAllah sis Jannah has an awesome collection of these duas and more in english and Arabic! Check it out Here! (<http://www.jannah.org/articles/adhkaar.doc>). May Allah reward her immensely (Amin).

There are demons all over and we need protection of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala. By dua we are creating the space around us so that they can't mess with us. If you dilligently practice these duas you will see a difference in your life. Do this for the sake of Allah and the fact that these motivations/rewards we should be more inspired to do os. People nowadays are considered to be good Muslims just because they pray! Neurosis of this society is that everyday we are in a state of haste, fast food, televisions, fast computers..fast everything. In Islam the morning is a time of tranquility. Haste is from shaytan and the kuffar know this. Take time with Allah subhanahu wa t'ala. Do your wudhu and still your soul.

We don't deny the world. e.g Imam Malik had nice clothes, good house, perfumes etc. If Allah gives you wealth then it is okay to live in a good state. Initially in the early state of Islam the shuyukh were wearing really ragged clothes. Umar (radhiallaahu anhu), went to Shaam and saw Muawiya (radhiallaahu anhu), was wearing really nicely ornamented clothes, and he got angry! Uthmaan (radhiallaahu anhu), advised Umar (radhiallaahu anhu), and said "these people, if they wore what we wear in the desert would be looked down upon". Indicating there is a hikma in that. So Umar (radhiallaahu anhu), said "Allah gave us dignity through Islam and if we seek dignity in other than that, Allah is going to humiliate us!"

There is a ikhtilaaf in the issue of dhikr in congregation. Imam Malik considered it to be Makrooh, Imam Shafi thought it was permissible based on a sound hadith (that Allah was sending speeding angels to the gatherings of dhikr. and when they descend on them, they go to

Allah and Allah asks them about His slaves (although He knows better) and they tell Him they found them praising and glorifying Him).

The Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) liked poetry and he used to listen to it, like anasheed are permissible halal entertainment. The point is remember Allah subhanahu wa t’ala.

To do Hajj voluntarily is better than Jihaad (the end point of Jihad is worship of Allah.)

Jihad is what brings us back to life as an Ummah. Never belittle Jihad. (Whoever dies without even the yearning for Jihaad has died a Munafiq).

Somone asked about celebration of the Prophet's birthday (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) Maulid. Abu Lahab gets respite with a little water every Monday (in hell) because he freed a slave the day the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) was born. But the point about it is if you really want to celebrate his birthday just do what he asked you to do! Follow his example and you will be celebrating everyday.

Fasting

"The faster has two joys when he breaks his fast and when he sees His Lord". Hadith. As a closing we'll go through some concepts on the "Secrets of Fasting" by Imam Al Ghazali. One of the greatest blessings Allah gives us to protect us from the plots of Shaytaan and destory shaytaan's hopes. He made fasting a shield/fortress for believers. The means by which shaytaan takes a hold of the believer is through Shahawat.

Two things destroy a person:

1. Shahawaat: sensory pleasures, desires.
2. Shubuhaat: understanding.

If the shaytaan can't get to the shubuhaat (which is hard if you stick to the right aqeedah), he will

try to entice you with desires. "Fasting is half of patience".(hadith). "Patience is half of Imaan". Therefore fasting alone is a 1/4 of Imaan.

The Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said "Every good action is multiplied by 10 to 700 except fasting for it is Mine and I will reward it accordingly" Hadith Qudsi. Fasting teaches us the attributes of the independent one. Patience is the key to many openings from Allah. This is why the greatest victories for the Muslims were in Ramadhan. The foul smell of the mouth is more pure with Allah than the scent of Musk. Hadith. "Everything has a door and the door to worship is fasting" (weak hadith).

The shaytaan flows in men like the flowing of the blood (that's why its important to abstain from haram food and alchohol), so constrict the way shaytaan can flow by hunger. "When Ramadhan comes the gates of Paradise are open, the gates of Hell are shut, the Shaytaan are chained, a caller calls out 'Oh seeker of good come into Islam on Seeker of bad desist!'. "Allah says in Jannah "eat and drink for the days you were fasting". Intelligence Test- short term pleasure for long term gain. There is a test given to children, whether they have one cookie now or two later. The more intelligent ones opted for two cookies later. We defeat shaytaan by taking control of his weapons.

We live in a pleasure culture, in this country we are like grazers who snack all day long.

Imam Al Ghazali talked about the Fiqh of fasting:

1. Outwardly (Dhahir)
2. Inwardly (batin)

The Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said "How many people fast and gain nothing except hunger and thirst!".

There are three types of fasting:

- 1, General: The common people fast that abstain the stomach and genitals from pleasure.

2. Elect: Where you hold the limbs accountable too (eyes, ears, tongue, hands, stomach, genitals, feet...the pathways of shaytaan).

3. Elect of elect: The heart fasts too (from bad thoughts etc). The body is like a country with seven boundaries (the seven limbs), the heart is the command center to guard the borders from unwanted visitors.

Give amanat to its people (Trust).The believer-Mu'umin comes from the word Amana. Allah has given us a trust. The sight, hearing, sound, heart, etc are all a trust from Him and we have to bring back the amana safe and sound. Children are both a trust and a blessing. Fasting trains us on taking care of our trust. The fasting of the elect of the elect. Fasting the heart from low aspirations, and worldly thoughts. Infaq is giving out. During Ramadhan we are in Akhirah mode we give out a lot (rest of the year we acquire). One of the scholars of Andalusia taking thoughts to account is the beginning of our Wilaya with Allah.

The fasting of the heart is important. There was an Imam who used to have a majlis, giving lectures to people. This one man would come from the street every day walk over people's shoulders and whisper in his ear. Then walk away. He did this for a long time, then suddenly stopped. The Imam went to find the guy and asked him why he didn't come anymore. The man said "I have daughters that I have to marry and some people who were envious of you told me to come to you everyday and bother you in your majlis in return for money. They wanted you to become angry and humiliated in front of your students. I came everyday whispering curses in your ear but you never responded or got angry. At last I gave up." The imam said "Why didn't you come to me, I would have given you money and saved you the trouble".

Salman was brought up a Zoroastrian worshippers of fire. His father was in charge. The fire was supposed to be eternal, but he saw his father keeping the flames up. Then he went to stay with a monk in his search for truth but saw him stealing money. Finally he went to another monk who told him to be patient for a Messenger was going to come from Yathrib, so he went to Yathrib to wait for the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam).

Recommendations

Don't talk a lot, don't waste time.

The Salaf used to pray 6 months before Ramadhan to see it, and used to spend the next six months begging for it to be accepted.

The greatest proof of deficiency of man is to know he could have done it better.

Do Qiyaam every night, short surahs are recommended towards the end of time, since most people don't have the himma or the time.

Dhuha prayer is mandub either 2, 4, or 6 Rakaats. Prayer on time, is the most important of all affairs.

Don't eat the full meal till after you pray Maghrib. It is better to pray Isha in the house, though if you want to do Khatm of Quran go to the Masjid.

Avoid the mentality that Taraweeh is only 8 Rakaats and while people are doing more, you are outside talking.

Remember your brothers and sisters.

Don't feel giddy with the spiritual light, learn to contain the benefits.

Imam Malik used to like doing dhikr during Ramadhan and the best of which is Quran.

Imam Abu Hanifa recommended you read the Quran at least twice a year. More than one Khatm in Ramadhan is good!

The 7 day schedule of reading Quran:

Day 1: First 3 surahs

Day 2: Next 5 Surahs

Day 3: Next 7 Surahs

Day 4: Next 9 Surahs

Day 5: Next 11 Surahs

Day 6: Next 13 Surahs

Day 7: Finish the Quran

Counsel Sidi Ahmad Zarrooq (d. 1492 C.E.)

Know (may Allah give you and us success, and rectify our worldly and other worldly lives and grant us adherence to way of the truth in our journeys and in our sojourns) that:

Repentance is a key. And taqwaa (awareness of Allah subhanahu wa t'ala) is vast and uprightness is the source of rectification. Furthermore a servant is never free of either blunders, or shortcomings, or lassitude. Therefore never be neglectful of tawbah (repentance), and never turn away from the act of returning to Allah subhanahu wa t'ala and never neglect acts that bring you closer to Allah subhanahu wa t'ala. Indeed, every time one of these three occurs, repent and return.

Every time that you make a mistake, listen and obey. Any time you display shortcoming or lack of enthusiasm, don't desist in your efforts. Let your main concern be to remove from your outer state anything that is displeasing, and then maintain its outward state from continuous counsel. Continue doing this until you find that your fleeing from anything outwardly displeasing is second nature, and your avoidance of the boundaries of prohibited things is as if it acts like a protective net that is placed before you. At this point, it is time to turn inward, toward your heart's presence, and to its reality with both reflection and remembrance. Don't hasten the end result before you have completed the beginning. But likewise, don't begin without looking toward the end result. This is so because the one who seeks the outset at the end loses providential care; and the one who seeks the end at the outset loses providential guidance.

Act in accordance with principles and the appropriate legal rulings, and not in accordance with stories and fantasies. Don't even consider stories of how things went with others, except as a tonic to strengthen your resolve. Certainly not as a reference based upon their outward forms, or what they seem to be telling us. In all of this, depend upon a clear path you can refer to, and a foundation that you can depend upon in all of your states. The best of these is the path of Ibn Ata'ullah, given that in it is a clear direction to Allah subhanahu wa t'ala.

Do not take from others' words unless it is in accordance with your own path, but submit to their implications if you desire realisation.

Avoid all forms of vain and foul speech to your absolute utmost. Put aside anything that you cannot discern its benefit immediately.

Beware of being extremely hard on yourself before you've obtained a mastery over it. But also beware of being too lax with it, in anything that concerns sacred rulings. This is so because it is constantly fleeing from moderation in everything, and it inclines towards extremism in both matters of deviance and guidance.

Seek out a companion to help you out in your affairs, and take his counsel concerning matters that occur from both your inward states and your outward affairs. If you do indeed take his companionship, then treat him in a manner commensurate with his state and give him of your counsel based upon his inabilities and abilities, because a perfected friend is no longer to be found. Indeed, in these times even a suitable companion who is agreeable rarely lasts!

And beware of the majority of people in matters that concern your religious and your worldly states, unless you have ascertained he has some sound relationship with his Lord based upon a knowledge that is free of his caprice or love of leadership, and a sound intellect free of the pitfalls of hidden agendas. Do not be heedless of the machinations of others or their hidden states. Consider these two from both their origins and their actions. A person of character and family-distinction rarely affects you with other than good. And yet a person of low origin's roots usually cause him to disregard you when times get tough.

Be extremely vigilant of the dominant qualities of a given people in any given land, and don't be heedless of the Divine Wisdom in the creation. And notice gathered-ness and separation, some of this we have already covered in our book *Al-Qawaa'id*, so take a look at it there.

Organise your time in a manner appropriate to the time-specific needs using gentleness and toleration. And be very wary of either harshness or laxity. This is so because too much laxity concerning permissible matters pulls the heart backward in its journey, until even a man of resolve ends up looking like a foolish boy.

Work for this world as if you would live forever, but work for your next life as if you would die tomorrow. Thus do not neglect the externals of your worldly needs. In the meantime do not be heedless of your end and final resting place.

Be extremely vigilant about avoiding positions of leadership, but should you be tried with such matters at least know your own limitations. Be absolutely sincere to Allah with the sincerity of one who knows full well who is placing demands upon him.

Surrender completely to His Decree with the submission of one who knows he can never overcome Him.

Have a firm foundation for all of your affairs and you will be safe from their pitfalls.

Organise your devotional practices, and you will find your time extended due to the barakah (blessings) in it.

Never be fanatical about anything, whether it is the truth or whether it is false, for your heart will then remain in a state of soundness towards others.

Never claim anything you are entitled to, not to mention what you're not entitled to and you'll be safe from tricks and treachery. This is so because anyone who claims some rank above his own will fall in humiliation. Whereas those who claim a rank they want will have it stripped from them. While those who claim a station less than their true rank will be elevated to even higher levels than they actually deserve.

Never give your companion anything of your state other than what his own state wants. This is so because if you go down to his level, he will show you contempt. Whereas if you attempt to raise him up to your level, he will abandon you.

Never demand a right from anyone whether an intimate or a stranger. The reason for this is a stranger in reality owes you nothing, and someone close to you is too precious to direct your blame to him.

Never assume that anyone in this world can really understand your circumstances other than from the perspective of his own circumstances. This is so because in reality everyone only sees things in accordance with their frames of reference and their personal path. However when aims, purposes and aspirations are similar, people tend to work together toward a common goal.

Never belittle any talk that involves absent people, even if there is no harm in it due to the possibility of harm entering into it. Guard your secrets even if you feel safe with someone, because the one you divulge your secret to is not a safer place than your own heart from whence it emanates.

Never leave an atom's weight of your regular devotional practice. Never be lenient with yourself in either lax times or times of high resolve. Indeed, should you miss some of your practice in a given time, redress it in another time. If you're not able to do your usual practice, at least occupy yourself with something else similar.

Never obey your ego even for a moment, nor believe any of its claims no matter what it tells you.

Be vigilant about your resolve in all of your affairs to your utmost. In fact, should you resolve to do something, then do it immediately before the resolve wanes.

Examine your soul constantly in matters that you are obliged to do, or are needed to be done. Anything you are in no need of doing, leave it. Even if it is something that is recommended. That means not involving yourself in anything other than absolutely necessary things, and real discernable needs.

Treat others just as you would want to be treated, and fulfill to them what is due to them.

All of this is really epitomised in the words of the poet when he said, if you desire to live such that your religion is safe, And your portion is full and your honour is sound, guard your tongue and never mention another's faults remembering you yourself have faults and others have tongues.

Watch your eye: Should it ever reveal to you the faults of others say to it, "O my eye! Other people have eyes too!"

Live treating others well And avoid aggression. And should others aggress against you. Leave them but in the best way. The source of these words is in fact nothing other than the traditions of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) when he said, "Be vigilant of Allah wherever you are, and follow a misdeed with a good deed, and it will remove it. And treat others with the most excellent of character."

In another, he (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said, "Every child of Adam makes mistakes, and the best of those who make mistakes are those who seek to redress them. Again, the Holy Spirit

inspired my heart's core that no soul will die until it fulfills its decreed portion of this world and its appointed time here. So be conscious of Allah and make your request with dignity."

In summation, repentance, awareness of Allah and uprightness are the foundations of all that is beneficial. The Truth is clear, and its details are weighty and significant. The affair belongs only to Allah subhanahu wa t'ala. Success is in His Hands.

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/The-Alchemy-of-Happiness#sthash.zFAti9wV.dpuf>

Transcript for Sufism in Islam

Transcript Details

Event Name: Sufism in Islam

Transcript Author: 4lch3m1st

Description: There`s a bunch of transcripts on Alchemists site. Good stuff

Date Transcribed: 1/1/2000 12:00:00 AM

Original URL: <http://www.blogcatalog.com/blog/the-alchemy-of-happiness/c64784f18885f8436146646e83a80bca>

Tasawwuf/Sufism in Islam

a talk sponsored by CAIR

Stanford University, May 4, 1997

Imam Hamza Yusuf, sometime khatib at the Muslim Community Association of Santa Clara, California, spoke on Sufism in Islam, directly following a lecture by Dr. Anne-Marie Schimmel, former Harvard professor of Oriental Studies. Imam Hamza began by noting that the architecture of Stanford is modeled after traditional Andalusian, Moroccan and North African universities. He said that Islamic architecture and civilization was once great as was its scholarship, but unfortunately the Muslim ummah has fallen behind in these spheres.

Imam Hamza continued:

"The fundamental and underlying message in the tradition of Islam I think personally is that it does not and refuses to create this dialectic in which a person's inward and their outward become split. [In non-Islamic systems] people are either forced to become esoterists or they are forced to become exoterists.

"In fact what Islam is trying to do and what most of the other spiritual religions and in fact from the Muslim perspective all of them have failed to do is to join these two elements in a harmonious and balanced way and this is why in the tradition of Islam Sufism has always been part of the traditional Islamic curriculum in every single Muslim university. I know of no period in the Islamic tradition in which Sufism was not taught in the universities and not seen as an important and fundamental aspect of the tradition of Islam.

"Sidi Ahmad Zarruq wrote a great book called the principles of Sufism in which he clarified traditional and orthodox Sufism says in his principle number 208, 'there are five reasons for repudiating the Sufis the first of these is with reference to the perfection of their path. For if the Sufis latch on to a special dispensation or if they misbehave or are negligent in a matter or if a fault manifests itself in them, people hasten to repudiate them.' Because they are people who

have traditionally been the most strongest and fierce adherents to the sacred teaching of Islam and they have been the ones also that have never inclined toward easy ways out on terms of the shariah or the sacred law.

"They have been the strictest adherents to the sacred law, but they have a wonderful principle: that is be hard on yourself and be gentle with other people. Unfortunately, the disease of this age amongst many Muslims is be easy on yourself and be hard on everybody else. So I think this is where the real crises of rejecting Sufism as one third of Islam has had really devastating results in much of the modern Islamic phenomenon. {Shaykh Ahmad Zarruq} said 'this is because no servant is free of fault unless he is granted infallibility or protection by God.'

"The second reason [for people to repudiate Sufis] is the sensitivity of the observer. [The observer's] criticism of the Sufis and their knowledge and states occurs as much as the ego, nafs, hastens to deny knowledge it does not possess. Imam Sayyidina Ali was known for saying, 'Whoever is ignorant of a thing is its natural enemy.'

"The third reason [to reject the Sufis] is the existence of many who fall short of their claims and those who seek [worldly] gain through the guise of religiosity. This has been an affliction within the Muslim ummah. It is well known of the people claiming to be Sufis, putting on the garments of Sufis, and tricking simple followers and worshippers; getting them to give them their money, to slavishly serve them, and these type of things. This has happened historically in the Muslim world. The [pious] imams have always been the strictest at trying to prevent this deception, because there is nothing worse than deceiving somebody in religion. Give me a mafia gangster any day over a fraudulent religious observer--really! This is the reason for denying any claim that they might make even though there is proof of it. Because it is found doubtful.

"The fourth reason is fear for the generality that they might be lead astray by following esoteric doctrines without upholding the letter of the law as happens to many ignorant people. So ignorant people might hear some statement which is said by a Sufi and they completely misunderstand it. And Abu Yazid al-Bistami put in Imam Dhahabi's *tabaqat* is considered a faqih (jurisprudent). Imam Dhahabi is considered a student of Ibn Taymiyya and he considers Abu Yazid al-Bistami a reasonable and sound source of hadith. Yet Abu Yazid al-Bistami is the one who is noted for saying 'Subhane' which means 'Glory to Me!' This is known in the technical vocabulary of the Sufis as a *shatha*, an ecstatic utterance. If a person says it in a state in which their self is absent they are not taken to account for it We have proof of it in *Sahih Bukhari* about a slave in the middle of a desert in which the Prophet (s) says that because he finds his lost beast he shouts out in joy 'Allah you are my slave and I am Your lord!' The Prophet explained that that slave made a mistake in his ecstatic state after finding his animal. This is someone who finds their animal, so how much greater for someone who has found his Lord?! What about his state of ecstasy?

"The fifth reason [to reject Sufism] is the covetousness some people have for the ranks of Sufism. In traditional Muslim society the Sufis were held up as literally the highest people in the society; they were the shaykhs. Imam Nawawi was a great Sufi, [Qadi] Iyad was a great Sufi, Ibn Hajar Asqalani was a great Sufi, Imam Ibn Jawzi was a great Sufi. All of these great imams were known to be Sufis of great stature. Abu Hamid al Ghazzali who is given the title *Hujjat al-Islam* is probably the greatest example. People wanted to be like them, and the

Arabs are notorious in their understanding if you are not like noble people pretend to be like them because even that is a type of nobility.

"Finally [Sidi Ahmad Zarruq] said, 'Thus people are inclined to become inflamed with the Sufis, more so than with any other group.' People in official positions exert pressure on them more than anybody else. This was a traditional area in which the government would try to influence the Sufis because they knew that they had such a vast amount of power over the common people. The Sufis were traditionally the most distant and furthest people from the governors or the government unless they were righteous rulers like Nizam al Mulk who Imam Ghazali actually helped to build the Nizamiyya system of teaching. And anyway [Sidi Ahmad Zarruq] says, 'Anyone who falls in any of these categories except for the last is either rewarded or excused and Allah knows best.'

"I was asked to make a du`a and I would like to make the du`a of the people of North Africa which I heard many, many times in North Africa and was always very impressed by it; it is called Salat Tunjiyya--the prayer that saves people:

"Allahumma salli ala Sayyidina Muhammadin salatan tunjina biha min jami al ahwali wal afat
wa taqdi lana biha jami`a al hajjat
wa tutahiruna biha min jami`a as-sayyat
wa tarfauna biha `indaka ala darajat
wa tubalighuna biha aqsa al ghayat min jami`a al khayrat fil hayati wa bad al mamat
wa ala alihi wa sahbihi wa sallim tasliman kathira"

O Allah pray on our Master Muhammad a prayer by means of which we will be saved from every awe-inspiring harmful thing,

and that will take care of all of our needs,

and purify us by means of it from all of our ugly qualities and characteristics

and raise us and purify us by means of it from all of our ugly qualities and characteristics

and raise us up by means of it in Your Presence to the highest of degrees,

and cause us to reach by means of it the extremes of all goodness in our life and after our death

and this prayer be upon his family and his companions

and may he be given safety and much salaam.

"I would like to thank on behalf of CAIR and the Muslims in this area everybody for attending this lecture. Thank you very much."

The following are some notes from the famous Sufism Internet Debate of 1993, which refer to the discussion of the concept of fana' which was mentioned by Shaykh Hamza above as the state in which some Sufi masters issued utterances (shatha) of outwardly anti-Islamic import.

In Book, Volume 2, pages 396-397 of Majmu'a Fatawa, Shaikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyya speaks about fana also known in Sufism as annihilation.

He said:

"This state of love is the state of many people that are from the people of Love to Allah `azza wa jall, they are the people of the love of Allah and the People of the Will (al-irada) of Allah, it is typical of many of the people that love God and seek Him. Because that person has vanished in his lover, in Allah `azza wa jall through the intensity of the love, because he vanished in Allah's love, not his own ego's love. And he will recall Allah, not recalling himself, remember Allah, not remembering himself, visualizing Allah [yastashhid], not visualizing himself, existing in Allah, not in the existence of himself. When he reaches that state 'Ana al-Haqq' (I am the Truth) or 'Subhane' (Glory to Me!) and he will say 'maa fil jubba ill-Allah' (there is nothing in this cloak except Allah), because he is drunk in the love of God and this is a pleasure and happiness that he cannot control."

Further on Shaikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyya says:

"This [matter] has in it Haqq and there is in it Batil. But when someone will enter a state with his fervor intense love (`ishq) to Allah, he will enter a state of absentmindedness, and when he enters a state of absentmindedness, he will find himself as if he is accepting the [concept] of ittihad [union]. I do not consider this a sin. Because that person is excused and no one may punish him as he is not aware of what he is doing. Because the pen does not condemn the crazy except when he is restored to sanity. And when that person is in that state and he was wrong in what he did, he will be under Allah's address:

"Rabbana laa tu`akhidhna in-naseena aw akhta`na"

"Our Lord, do not take us to task if we forget or make mistakes." (Baqara 2:286)

"And Allah says in other verse, "wa laa junaaha `alaykum fima akhtaatum bihi" - "there is no blame on you if you unintentionally do a mistake."

On page 339, in Volume 10, Ibn Taymiyya says:

"there is a story of two men who were so respectful and loved each other very much. One of them fell in the water [of the sea] and immediately the other threw himself behind him. Then the first one, who was sinking asked, "what made you throw yourself here?" He said, I vanished in you, and when I vanished in you I thought you were me and I was you."

And further on Ibn Taymiyya continues:

"As long as he is not through something that is prohibited, it is accepted, but if it were prohibited (the intention was bad then he is not excused."

And Shaikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyya continues (Volume 2, page 397):

"And because of that [situation]many of the saints like `Abdul Qadir Jilani, have an excuse because they are in a state of love `ishq)."

That subject is also mentioned in a whole chapter on detail from page 337-343, entitled: "al-Fana' alladhee yujad fi kalam as-sufiyya yuffassar bi-thalathat umur" (The Word Annihilation found in Sufism explained in Three Ways). This chapter describes the concept of fana' in detail.

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/Sufism-in-Islam#sthash.ltkLE6Xu.dpuf>

Transcript for Success, In this World, and the Next

Transcript Details

Event Name: Success, In this World, and the Next

Transcript Author:

Description:

Date Transcribed: 1/1/2000 12:00:00 AM

Original URL:

My advice to you, O Possessor of virtue and courtesy: if you desire to reside in an exalted place amongst the ranks of people, a place where you are high and exalted of virtue and courtesy is..." Thus opens the poem of the great scholar, Ibn al Haddad as translated and commented upon by Hamza Yusuf.

Though short, this poem of council contains an immense amount of wisdom and is similar to the study of the Purification of the Heart.

Shaykh Ibn al Haddad gives the seeker of knowledge the keys to both success in this world and success in the next world. Hamza Yusuf's commentary contains his usual style of putting the obvious before us in a way we will never forget. He reminds us of such things as, "Islam is the only religion where you will find a king at the door of beggars asking for their prayers." This is an inspiring talk that will help us to establish our own priorities for this world and the next.

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

Alhamdulillah, praise and blessings be upon the Prophet. InshaAllah I wanted to go over the poem that was written by Shaykh Abdullah al Haddad. It is a poem, it is very short and yet he really put into it all of the qualities that one needs to have success in this world and in the next. It is a poem of advice and counsel. It is a poem of counsel and it was commented upon by one of the students. It is a beautiful commentary. I thought it was so beneficial I wanted to share it with other people because I had not seen it before. I just recently, somebody was kind enough to bring me a copy from Hadramawt as most of you know is in Yemen. It is a place that the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) blessed. It is also a place that became a refuge for a lot of the Prophet's family when they were being persecuted in Iraq. Many of them actually fled to the Yemen and many fled to Morocco and many fled to India which is why you have very large numbers of Al Bayts in places like India, Yemen and Morocco. It is disproportionate to other parts of the Muslim world. It has to do with the fact that those were places where the family actually sought refuge and obviously one of the reasons why they sought refuge was because Bani Ummayah basically set out to eliminate the family of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) because they were so worried about the political implications of charismatic figures from among them a major concern of theirs because this was obviously the initial split that occurred between the muslims was where does authority lie and many of the muslims took the opinion that authority lied in the family of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) and that many of them became of the party of Ali or Shia Ta'Ali.

Now we disagree with the Shia on one particular which is that we actually believe that the authority that the Prophet's family was given was a spiritual authority in other words that from many of the family would come some of the greatest scholars of Islam and some of the greatest spiritual guides but the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) informed the community early on that political sovereignty and spiritual sovereignty would separate and he actually gave a very exact date. He said it would happen 30 years after his death and that occurs with the death of Hasan bin Ali. At that point the political authority became political and was severed from the spiritual reality and that is in no way to detract from Sayyidina Mu'awiyah but Mu'awiyah was a political leader and the people that were under him were political more than spiritual.

That is why his period of khilafah is not considered from the Khulufah-a-Rashideen which does not mean that he was not rightly guided. It has to be understood. It is just that his political authority became divested of the spiritual authority that the first four khilafah had. So that is the

difference and a lot of people do not understand that. It becomes a problem because if you study the early history, the early history is actually quite complicated and it has been simplified by scholars because it causes so much trouble when people actually read about what happened because it is very hard to understand how sahaba could have started killing each other. It is very difficult to understand how people that were actually in the presence of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) could start fighting over political authority but that shows you how central that issue was early on.

Now what happens and this is something that is absolutely necessary to understand today which a lot of muslims I feel do not fully understand and that is the idea of having an absolute separation between spiritual reality and political reality and the reason for that is when the spiritual and the political become mixed up the political deludes or remotes from its reality. So what you have is state controlled religion and state controlled religion is always a disaster. It has always been a disaster and will always be a disaster until a Prophet comes or a student of a Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) and that is why students of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) were very adept at doing that especially Abu Bakr and Umar because of the gifts that they have been given. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) made it very clear that Umar that if there was a Prophet after the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) it would have been Umar. In other words his ability to perceive things was so extraordinary that even in the most difficult of circumstances he was able to come up with remarkable solutions for them.

That is important to note which does not mean that we do not want political leaders to have ethics or morals. We just do not want them to be mullahs or ulema because once that happens they have to compromise. That is the nature of politics. Politics is the ground of compromise, it is not the ground of religion. Religion is the ground or principle and if you want the biggest proof for this ask yourself why every great scholar fled from government service in the history of Islam. You have to ask yourselves that question. Why did Abu Hanifah prefer jail over becoming a civil servant? Why? If he understood that to be in a political position was a good thing for a righteous man then he would have been the first to do that because he would have felt that responsibility. Why did he then as a spiritual and religious leader flee from political leadership because he knew what it meant. Nobody is ever pleased with their politicians. It is just the human condition. Even the munafiqun grumbled in Madinah. Nobody is ever pleased with their politicians and once the spiritual person becomes a politician, it is the spirituality that suffers not the politics. It is the spirituality that suffers.

So these people who fled to Hadramawt many of them actually became great scholars and that is where you get the ba'lawi tradition and Shaykh Haddad was part of that. It has continued up to the present day, they have schools. Within their tradition they have a complete Islamic system in other words they have fiqh, they have Arabic texts, they have texts in logic, usool everything including the science of ihsan. The same is true for instance of Morocco, the same is true for Turkey, the same is true for Pakistan, Mauritania. Mauritania you can study the entire Islamic tradition from beginning to end only reading Mauritanian scholars with the exception of the Quran, the hadith, those are givens but I am talking about usool. Sidi Abdullah Hajj Ibrahim wrote the book of usool that is studied in Mauritania which is his versification of Jum al Juwami of Imam Suqi so when you study usool in Mauritania you study his. He versified al-Iraqi's famous book Al-Alfiyah. When you study grammar, you will study commentaries of the Mauritania grammarians on the classical texts.

So that is one of the unique aspects of Islam, wherever it goes it develops an intellectual tradition and is indigenous to the people. It actually ends up becoming complete in of itself and this has yet to happen in the West but it has to happen in other words we have to develop within our Western muslims, we have to develop the Islamic tradition. It has to be here and the text that we use and the language we speak in has to be indigenous to the people that is part of Islam wherever it goes. One of the ulema said Islam is like water but the vesicle that contains it has a colouring so that Islam is pure but it takes on the colour of the vessel. So in Senegal it has a certain colour. In Indonesia it has a certain colour. That is why when you see it, it is different. In Afghanistan, it is different. So every place it goes it is the same water that has nourished the people but it takes on its own colouring. That is part of the universality because if we were all meant to become Arabs then that is a disaster. It is nothing against Arabs but it is just not what Allah wanted for human beings for us all to become Arabs. I mean people say why do you not speak Arabic to your children? I say because it is not my mother tongue. Their tongue is English. That is where I grew up and that is the language. For me, Arabic is a religious language which is why I learned it. I didn't learn it to talk to Arabs, to have conversations to say "how much are the tomatoes?". You can buy tomatoes here, you do not need to go to Arabia. In fact, they come from here.

When we study we should study for Allah and that is why Islam has to be freed of any cultural apparatus. It has to be freed of that Islam. It does not mean that Islam does not adapt to the culture that it is in but Islam in of itself has to be seen of being free of that.

So he wrote this as a counsel and really just put everything that was needed for the purification of the self in it. So it is similar, it is more abridged than say the Mathurat but it really does contain an incredible amount of wisdom in it. All of these texts share similarities because they are largely derived from Imam al Kushayri, Imam al Ghazali, Abu Tariq al Makii, Imam Junaid founding teachers of the science are the same so they are all deriving from these sources.

So he begins “my advice to you of possessor of fadl and adab, if you desire to reside in an exalted place amongst the ranks of people, a place where you are high and exalted”. So he begins by saying wasiyah and the wasiyah is counsel, it is an advice. Allah says in the Quran “that we have counselled those that went before you and you yourself to have taqwa”. So that is called the wasiyah of Allah. It is the advice of God to have taqwa and the wasiyah al ashara are the famous ten commandments so it can also be seen as a type of principle that somebody should follow.

So he is giving counsel and it is to you. Counsel only benefits the people who are willing to accept it. If you given counsel to somebody who is a vile person they will not accept your counsel. One of the things that the poet al Mutanabi said that noble people if you are good to them you possess them in other words if you do good to somebody that is noble it is a type of possession because he feels indebted. It is the nature of good people. If you do good to them they feel indebted. But if you do the same to a vile person he becomes angry and resentful which is very interesting about human nature. There are people who become resentful because you have treated them well so that is what he is arguing. He is arguing I am giving it to you, why? Because you are somebody that has fadl (virtue) and you have adab and these are two really important words in the Islamic tradition because the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) is somebody who taught you virtuous character. “I was only sent to teach people virtuous character, noble character”. These are called the fada’il.

The fada’il tradition according to Qadi Abu Bakr ibn Al Arabi the famous Andulucian Qadi. He said all of virtues are reduced to four: courage, temperance, prudence and justice. Those are called the moral virtues. All virtues are extensions of one of those four. So for instance generosity is a virtue. Out of these four which would it be classified under? Courage because generous people are courageous people because what prevents you from being generous. It is fear, you are afraid if I give him this thing then I won’t have any money. So it is only fear that prevents you from being generous. So generous people are actually courageous people. They are courageous with their money.

Now chastity which is also a virtue, what would that go under? Temperance. Any virtue that you can think of that is a moral virtue you can find it categorised under one of those four virtues. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) was the most courageous of men but which meant he was also the most generous of men so he was not only courageous in battle but he was courageous in wealth.

Now look at the Quran, what does Allah link in the Quran? “Allah has purchased yourself and your wealth”, both of them are expenditure. You have to expend your wealth and yourself and they are both acts of courage. He is talking to the one who already has virtue. You have to have the same fadl in order for you to recognise virtue because if you are bereft of that then you do not.

Now you also have to have adab because advice is only given when you are receptive to it. Now there are people if you give them advice they become angry at you. Why do they get angry? Well there are a number of reasons. One of the reasons they get angry is they simply think “who do you think you are to be giving me advice?”. So what does that mean? That person feels one of two things. Either you are beneath him or you are equal to him or her and you have no right. But if you actually see somebody as being better than you, you will take their advice. That is why people look to people who they think are in this culture more together, I will go ask him because he has got his act together as opposed to me, I am a mess so this is what people do which in this culture which is one of the things that people do, they go to psychiatrists. I guarantee you the reason people get interested in psychiatry is almost inevitable because they are deeply disturbed people. They are actually trying to work out themselves. They often have real serious problems. That is not everybody but I am talking about a lot of people and that is why if you study the statistics about psychiatrists the number of illicit relationships they get into with their clientele, things like that, you are dealing with people that are not prepared to be giving counsel if things like that happen something very seriously is wrong, there is a breakdown.

So when you give advice one of the things about adab and this is really interesting to me. Adab is the ability to know the place of things and to give things their proper due so it is really translated as comportment or a type of discipline in which you recognise where things belong and part of recognising where things belong is to recognise where you belong in relation to social hierarchies. One of the things that this culture almost never talks about it, it talks about civil rights or human rights a lot but I do not think it is ever mentioned the idea of social rights, is your right to have equality in society you see because that is a “ideal” of democracy – people are

equal but in fact they are not. In this culture it is very clear there are social hierarchies and if you fall at the bottom of one woe unto you if you try to crash the party of a higher rank of society so social rights are never talked about.

In the Islamic tradition one of the really interesting things about Islam is that it teaches us that there is an internal hierarchy that is known only to God and therefore it challenges you to recognise that everyone outside yourself may be better than you in the eyes of God and so you have to have comportment with everybody even a person that you might think is lower in social standing. They could be higher in spiritual standing and this is why you had kings at the doors of beggars in the history of Islam. There is no other religion that I know of that has that quality where you literally had kings at the door of beggars asking for their prayers. The other that is really interesting is that in this culture you will not get people from Blackhawk or from Los Gattos going to church in East Oakland. It is just not the way society works yet in the Muslim world the richest man could pray next to the most impoverished man in the same prayer line and it has always been like that and that is something that is really unusual about Islam is it creates a true brotherhood.

There is a recognition that people have things in the world that Allah has given them and other people lack those things but that does not prevent you from seeing this person as essentially equal before God and possibly and in fact probably according to most of the hadith about rich and poor people. The poor person is probably closer to God than you are and that instils in you a desire to actually be kind to them because you are actually worried that you might upset your Lord by having any contempt or even just simply treating them less than they deserve. This is the secret of adab and that is why our tradition is a tradition of adab and adeeb in Arabic is the one who has mastered language. It is what they call a literary person. An adeeb is a literary person. Why? Because the adeeb is the one who puts words in their proper place. The adeeb is the one who learns language and this is something that if you look at modern man and modern woman we are a very degraded creature because we do not speak proper language anymore. I am talking about English, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, the whole lot of us. There are very few people on the planet that know how to actually speak properly, that really understand the mechanics of language and what words go in what order and for what person and traditionally in the Muslim world in Arabic at the time of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) everybody knew how to speak. They did not know how to write. They did not know how to read. They knew how to speak and that is why when the Quran spoke to them it spoke to them in their language so they knew what “qalla” meant, if Allah says “qalla sawfa ta la’muun”, they knew exactly what qalla meant. When Allah said la ilaha not la ilahun ill Allah, they knew exactly what that meant. When

Allah said “itiqAllah” they knew what taqwa was they understood what it meant. This is something that has been lost so he is talking to a person who has virtue and comportment adab.

“If you really want to be exalted” now this exaltation that he is talking about is not in the eyes of others it is in the eyes of Allah because there are people that concern themselves with rank in the dunya. These are ahle-dunya and one of the signs of ahle-dunya traditionally I am talking about in the Muslim worlds, one of the signs traditionally were people that concerned themselves with those things that would ensure social ranking, that it would ensure they would be upwardly mobile and that was their obsession. Well for the people of akhirah their concern was that they were internally upwardly mobile not externally that their standard of living was not increasing. They were not concerned with their standard of living but they were concerned with their standard of conduct with Allah. That is what they were concerned about. Were they living upto the standard that Allah had set for them because Allah has set a standard for humanity in behaviour and that was their concern. Were they living upto that standard? That was their desire to raise their standard of spiritual living not their standard of material living and we are now living in a world where the standard of material living is literally the only that people perceive anymore and therefore increasingly to achieve that people will be remiss in their standard of ethical behaviour. They will actually neglect principled standards in order to achieve that external standard.

Then he says that “in order for you to be in the forefront to outstrip, to go ahead and to achieve the ghayah” and the ghayah is it traditionally came from a word that meant the flag, the standard, the standard bearer was always out front and it became a metaphor for achieving an end. So a ghayah is originally a rayah, a flag that came to mean to achieve an end. If you want to achieve this end and to reach it in the state of felicity and to achieve your goals and desires what is his advice?. TaqwAllah, now taqwa is an amazing word in Arabic because it comes from a very small group of words which have weak radicals on both ends – waquah. Its root meaning is to protect or defend and weqiah is the word Arabs used for prevention, to prevent something from happening so the Arabs say “a penny of prevention is better than a pound of treatment” so it is more intelligent to prevent illness than to wait until it happens and then to have to suffer treatment.

What he is recommending here to us is taqwaullah. The one who desire His graces, compassion of Allah. The unique, the single, the remover of all calamities and tribulations so that is what he is saying. This is the foundation of all advice and this is from the Quran directly. Allah says

“save yourselves” same root word and “save your families from the fire”. Now how do you do that? How do you save your families?

First of all save yourself and that is important because Allah now we usually think Allah save us but Allah is telling us to save yourself. It is very interesting if you think about that, we usually think of Allah save us but Allah is saying to us save yourselves so why would Allah be saying that to us because only Allah can save us in reality. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said that no one would get into paradise because of his actions and they said what about you Ya Rasulallah, not even you O Messenger of Allah?. He said not even me unless Allah immersed me in His mercy. Now that does not mean that this is simply you go to paradise and you go to hell. That is not the way it works. So when Allah says save yourselves and your families from the hellfire what He is telling us “I have given you all of the means for salvation and you have to use them because if you do not you have not allowed Me to save you”. This is the idea that if you go to a physician and the physician gives you a medication why did you go to the physician? To be cured. What did you think you were going to get from a physician? A cure. Well he gave you a cure but it was not what you expected. You thought he was going to give you a pill and you just had to take it every morning and you would spontaneously get better but he told you you had to start exercising everyday. He told you you had to stop eating fats, he told you you would have to give up sugar. He told you you couldn't smoke any more. So he gave you a list of things to do and then six months later you come back and nothing has changed in fact things are worse and then the doctor says what happened? Didn't you take my advice? I found it so difficult well here is the choice do not take my advice and keep getting worse and then see what is more difficult losing your health completely or taking my advice. The aqal is the one who thinks things through.

He goes to the end. “Don't they reflect about the Quran in a deep way?”. Tadabbur in Arabic. Duibbar is the end of something. You have qubl and dubbar. The front and the back yatadubbar mean to force yourself to the end of something so it is taking something to its logical conclusion so for instance you do not like to exercise which at 30 is not really a problem but at 40 it becomes a problem and then at 50 it is getting very serious and by 60 you are immobile. So the person who at 30 was thinking about what is it going to be like when I am 60 if I do not do something about this that is an intelligent person. It is not a genius, it is just somebody that is looking around at others and noticing this person is 60 and he is fit and has energy and he is doing all these things and this other person he has been smoking so now he has to go round with a canister. He is walking round with a canister or he is in a wheelchair or he is on a ventilator and that is just looking. That does not mean fitness and all these things are going to guarantee

because there are not guarantees with anything in life other than that we are all going to die. But the point is there are asbab in the world.

Now if you look at people that were filled with m'aasiya (disobedience) dissipate themselves. They expend all of their energies in disobedience you know by the age of 25 or 30 there is a darkness that has descended upon their faces. Young people whether they are muslim or non muslim or whatever. Young people have a light and that light is simply they have not accrued a lot of wrong actions. That is why if you see young dark people you know something is seriously wrong but there is a light in youth that is simply the vigour of youth and it is also the fact that young people have not accrued a lot of wrongs. If you look at the faces of children, it is shining. Why are people so attracted to the faces of little children? Because they see innocence. Why is that innocence there? Because there are no wrong actions so you are attracted to purity by nature and that attraction in really sick people is what causes these problems in this culture and it is a problem in the muslim world as well because that attraction becomes sick because there is platonic attraction. They are people that are attracted to virtuous people. That is their nature. There are people that are attracted to those people but shaytan, nafs, hawa, dunya, they like their portion in attraction so they will attempt to take something that is pure and defile it. That is the nature of the dunya is defilement. It is what the people of ihsan called the qudurat. Qudara means to stir up the mud at the bottom of a pond. You have a clear pond, easy to look down and see the bottom but if you muck up the bottom then you stir up all of that dirt. Well that is the nature of the should that if you allow these m'aasiya to be stirred up they will eventually muddy up the purity of the self because we are made of mud but we are also made of spirit so whichever one is dominating is the one that is going to show itself. This is why the light of the aged is obedience it is not youth and the darkness of the aged is disobedience, absolutely sound principle. So if you look out there, I mean I wanted to do just an experiment where you took all of the pictures of our awliya our righteous people and then you just put pictures of old people in the dunya and just see the faces and let the people see for themselves which group they want to be among when they get old. This is not about knowledge even because you can see faces of purity in villages amongst the simplest people.

One of the things about us that should prevent us from any type of arrogance or spiritual superiority is that most of us are not even practicing the Islam of the most common people in the villages of the muslim lands. I mean if you go to Mauritania I can show the people that no one in Mauritania thinks anything of and they do a juz of Quran every morning and every night. They do the mathurat of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) every morning and every night. They fast the three days of the month every month, they give whatever little sadaqah they have to

give which is a lot more than most of us to because for him a quarter is like a hundred dollars to us or more. This is a simple muslim nothing special there. So that is the type of age we are living in where people that do a little start thinking that they are really something. Part of having taqwa is that you do not fall into these traps because the self by nature is deceptive. It is constantly trying to deceive you.

It is the nature of the self, it is delusional and there is a psychology of self delusion which is very interesting and worth reading and I would recommend for people that are interested in this and I think everybody should be interested. I would recommend reading Daniel Gorman's book called "Simple Truths, Vital Lies: The Psychology of Self Deception" because one of the things that he points out in there is that groups are completely delusional. Groups enter into delusional states and individual delusion is actually less dangerous than group delusion because once groups become delusional it is very difficult to break it so we are living in a country that is in a delusional group state. We live in a country that people are in a delusional, a group delusion about how they perceive themselves in terms of what they are actually doing, what we are actually doing. I would like to say I am not part of all this but I am and so for me to set myself up outside of it is really the height of arrogance, what we are doing here, what we as a people are doing collectively and we are in a delusional state. The muslims are in a delusional state complete delusional state. So groups become very delusional.

If you study the Quran and I would do this as an exercise, read the Quran one time as an exercise. If you do not read Arabic read it in English as an exercise in looking at group delusional states and what you will find is every single Prophet was an individual that confronted a delusional group. Every single one of them, it is one individual going up against a deluded group and they always want to kill him. I mean that is the thing about groups, if you are not with us you are against us and that is a delusional state because nothing in this world is like that. That is manician, it is actually a theological fallacy that was rejected by the Christians through St Augustin and the muslims through Abul Hasan because muslims called them the Qadriyah. That was an early group in Islam, the Qadriyah who put everything black and white. There is good and evil. I am good therefore you are evil. That is the way it works. It is not like that, if it was like that we would not to have to face evil in ourselves and what Raghav al Hisbahani says that anything you see in other people is actually either manifest in you clearly to other people looking at you or is hidden in you like fire in flint in other words given the right situation it will come out because as he is human you are human and that is why once you start realising that you become less judgemental about people out there and that is why the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) what did he say? I was commanded to judge outwardly, I do not judge people's hearts as

it is not my business. Only God can do that. If I see somebody doing something wrong I can condemn the outward action the inward reality I do not have any authority over it. It is not my business because I do not know. There are too many variables only Allah can work that out.

So he is saying that this is at the essence of this teaching is to have taqwa of Allah. Now Allah says in many verses of the Quran, the first commandment in the Quran, if you read Surah Baqarah the first commandment you come to in the Quran is to have taqwa and it is to all of humanity. The first degree of taqwa is taqwa al kuffar and that is why when Allah says “my Mercy has encompassed all things and I have decreed it for the people of taqwa” is that only meant the idea of taqwa that you and I think of when we think of taqwa then we would all be lost but that taqwa includes the mercy of Allah the taqwa of kuffar which every muwahid enters into. Every muwahid is a muttaqi because he has fear of kuffar, he does not want to associate with Allah.

Now even because Allah is merciful and this is something to think about. Imam al Ghazali's position to me it just seems the one that seems the fairest and that is why he obviously I think expounded it, he felt that this included people that had been shown shirk to understand it so as long as people had not been really shown and explained what they were doing wrong they were not accountable for which is closer to the understanding of the mercy of Allah because Allah's mercy is vast and that is also consistent with the verse in the Quran which is the first prohibition mentioned in the Quran “do not set up idols with God once you know”. Once you know, We do not punish people until they are given knowledge. Once they are given knowledge then they are held accountable, responsible for that knowledge. Prior to that we do not believe there is an accountability. There is a khilaf about that in aqeedah. The dominant position in the Islamic world which the majority of muslims follow is the position that there is intellectual accountability in other words even if people are never given a message they are accountable for what in the west is called natural law. In the West, there is a natural law and this is what the founding fathers of the US when they said “we hold these truths to be self evident that all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator”. How did they do that? They did not use recourse to revelation in that text. What they meant was a natural law, it is discernable that people have rights given from their Creator one of them is life so every human being in essence understands that he has been given life and really does not have the right to take life from another so according to Abu Mansour al Naturdi according to his people, people will be held accountable for murder even if they had never been given a message, that is a position. I am personally inclined to that just naturally. It is not the position of Abul Hasan's people. They

actually feel that you are not accountable until you are actually given a message of revelation because of the nature of the intellect. It is too clouded and it cannot work out things.

So what then is taqwa? The first level of taqwa is taqwa kuffar. The second level of taqwa is taqwa al kaba'ir that you are actually fearful of major wrong actions with Allah. What are the kaba'ir? There are differences of opinion about that but generally. Imam Dhahabi wrote and he has over seventy and most of the ulema say that is just too much because people would be held to account for far too much. Some of the ulema say there are only the seven that are mentioned in the seven deadly sins in Islam which are different to the seven deadly sins in Christianity. The dominant opinion is they are those sins that you have performed and a specific punishment has been given in shariah for them. A specific punishment either worldly or other worldly it is very clear whoever does this, this happens so there is uqubah associated with it.

There are certain things where we are not told clearly what would be the effect of that and those go under the category of sughahir or the lesser sins although Ibn Abbas and others were of the opinion that any sin that was continuous enters into the realm of enormity, kabirah simply because a person they do not have the contrition or remorse for that sin that their heart is bereft of real taqwa of Allah.

So taqwa is putting the self in the protection of the sanctity of the law the shariah and what protects it from evils in both abodes in other words in this world and the next so that is the definition of taqwa. It is placing the self in the protection of scared law and in what protects from the evils of the two abodes and Allah says in the Quran in Al-Mudathhir "He is worthy of being guarded against" in other words His wrath. Allah is worthy of taqwa, it is a right of Allah that we actually have taqwa and also He is worthy of maghfirah in other words if you have taqwa then what you expect is maghfirah for your shortcomings because everybody falls short and so that is from the mercy of Allah so what we are being told basically is that if you do these things then you will all be forgiven so that gets back to who saves us? Who saves us? We save ourselves but we only save ourselves by the grace of Allah so when Allah commands us to save ourselves He is not saying something that is meaningless, He means very much guard yourself against the fire, save yourselves, guard yourselves and your family.

Now how do you guard your family? Ibn Abbas said you teach them and you give them adab. That adab of the shariah is taqwa. That is the adab, that is the comportment of the sacred law to have taqwa.

So one of the definitions of taqwa is to guard oneself against those awesome matters that should put fear in your heart and also to roll up your sleeves in the work of what Allah has given us, the wazaif. It is an interesting word because wazaifa now in modern Arabic means employment so wazaif is an employee but in classical Arabic in the technical vocabulary of the ulema the wazaif were those things that one did in order to draw near to Allah so again if you look at people in this world why are they in the wazaif in their employment? In order to raise their standard of living. Why are the people of Allah in their wadaif? In order to raise their station with the living. That is the difference.

So taqwa is the foundation of the path to God and some of them said it is four matters: to fulfil the obligations, doing what Allah commanded and avoiding what He prohibited you inwardly and outwardly, to follow the sunnah and adab because this is an important aspect the adab, I will give you an example. I was in a situation where somebody did something which was a gross breach of adab and I mentioned that. It had to do with the culture and adaat. For instance in Arab culture you do not walk upto a woman and propose to her I mean you just do not do that. Now is there anything in shariah saying that you cannot do that? Does it say in shariah that it is haraam to propose to a woman so where then does adab come in? It comes with how you do the proposal and that is part of the shariah. This is something a lot of especially modern muslims, I mean that is a whole word in itself “modern muslim” because modern muslims have a whole other understanding of Islam to the point that many of the early muslims would pull out their hair if they saw the behaviour or worse and I will tell you a true story. I know a Moroccan man who was on a bus with... I mean Sharh Bariyah like the Arabs said the worse calamities are the things that make you laugh. This man was on a bus and the bus had all of these people from the desert, village people, very pure people and I mean I lived with them I know. They drove into Agadir for the first time and they saw all of these tourists that were basically naked. He said they all start screaming and literally they could not believe it. They just went into a total state and he said it was one of the most powerful things I mean because he had got used to it but it was the first time they have ever seen it and they just went into this state. They thought it was some end of time, it was all something that happened that was terrible and they all started screaming and for the first time he told me he realised how enormous it was so adab is something we have completely lost I mean we really have forgotten about adab.

Now there is obviously adab can go to another extreme which is where you get into protocol and that is a whole other problem because it goes to the other extreme where the cultures becomes so inundated with the particularities of adab that you no longer have freedom. You breach adab in the tradition that is why I always stipulate with some of the ulema that I am just a primitive American so you have to allow some leeway because in the traditional Muslim world if you spend time with the ulema there is a real expectation of certain comportment which is now only in places like Yemen and some places in Morocco, some places in Syria and Sudan and places. It has been lost in a lot of places, I mean people do not have that understanding any more. I mean if you read the early stories about the...I mean I finished this edit of Imam Al Dariee biography who wrote Dua Nasiri. I am going to tell you this, a true story because I wrote it in the thing. We recorded Dua Nasiri in Fez and we finished at about 1 in the morning and nobody knew I was in Fez apart from these people and somebody had given me 100 dollars to give to somebody in Fez. We went out, had dinner and it was about 3.30 in the morning and we have to go to Tangiers and as we were driving up the hill I said to this man Muhammad bin Nees I said I have an amanah, a trust for so and so and I am not going to be able to see him because we just had to leave so quick. I said can you give it to him? He said bismillah I will give it to him. Just as I said that he said SubhanAllah I think we just passed him. It was 3.30 in the morning. He said go back so we drove back and he was standing in front of a white van without any windows. He did not know I was in Fez and he said when he saw me, he said SubhanAllah we just finished a khatam of the Quran and I made dua that I would see you tonight. Now we have just finished the Dua Nasiri, he opened the door of the van, there was about 20 of his people in there because they did khatam. He went like this bismillah and went down and they all broke into Dua Nasiri and they recited it from beginning to end. True story believe it or not, I don't care.

So Allah does those things. I call that on the shore of unseen oceans you see because if you look out at the ocean, why do people look at the ocean? It is much more interesting usually what is to their back right the land because you can see all these plants and trees and flowers but why do they look at the ocean? Part of it is what is that awe in us when we look at the ocean. Part of it is what is under. It is all that stuff that is hidden from us. If you wait long enough you will suddenly see this fish jump. Did you see that? That is what people do. Did you see that? Why are they so amazed? It is really interesting why they are amazed. Did you see that? Look over there. That is what Allah shows you when you believe in the unseen with these fish "did you see that?". If you spend enough time doing it you do not do that anymore. You just say subhanAllah. I am not making that up, that is the reality of life. Once you open yourself up to belief, it just keeps confirming itself to you. That is how you increase in imaan by just increasing in imaan because Allah gives you more to believe in. Have taqwa in Allah will keep teaching you more to have taqwa about. It is a real gift from Allah to all of us and that is why we should see it as a gift and

then some said it is protecting the matter which is your deen and avoiding sin. Guarding oneself against those calamities that befall us and cause us to trip and stumble.

Then he says our Shaykh meaning Abdullah bin Haddad said that is what is beautiful about our tradition in Yemen it is the same tradition as it is in Morocco as it is in Indonesia as it is in Mauritania as it is in Turkey as it is in Bosnia, that is the same teaching and it is all from the same source which is the Quran and then our beloved Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) and in reality it is all from Allah from the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) because the Quran is from him and then in reality it is all from Allah because the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) is from Allah and then in reality it is all from whoever teaches us because that it is the way it works so behind everything in reality is Allah but Allah has made means and so acknowledge the means is part of what Allah demands “if you are not grateful to people you are not grateful to Allah” so the greatest gratitude we should have is to the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) because in being grateful to him we are grateful to Allah and that is what Allah says “if you are not grateful to people you have not been grateful to Allah” so the only important matter that must always be at the forefront is that you recognise your gratitude to the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) or to your teachers, or to your mother and father in reality gratitude to Allah, there is no shirk because you are not veiled by the means. People of this world, people of dunya are veiled by the means. They think the means are reality behind the doctor is Allah, behind the job is Allah, behind the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam), behind everything is Allah. Therefore in being grateful to everything we are grateful to Allah including being grateful to people who harm us because in reality they are doing us a big favour in drawing us near to Allah and so it gets to the point where you begin to feel gratitude towards everything and that is the highest maqam.

What does shaytan say and you won't find most of them in gratitude. That is what he wants to take you away from. Allah says how few of My servants are grateful so really it is gratitude. That is the root and taqwa is in essence gratitude. I mean do not be immersed by all this fear. Allah is worthy of taqwa in other words He is worthy of it because if it is all about the fear then you end up becoming somebody who is doing things motivated out of a very low force in this world which is fear. Fear is a low force. Fear is how these rule everybody. Do this otherwise this is going to happen. Get your insurance. Somebody sent me an ad and it was for insurance, life insurance. It said who is going to take care of your wife and children if you die? I said Allah, that is my answer. They are asking me and then they said who is going to take care of your house payments and this and that if you die. I said Allah, all the answers I had were Allah ad then I realised I did not need the life insurance. So why does that work with these people? It works

because they do not have the right answer. When they say who is going to take care of your wife and children when you die? What did Abu Bakr say when he gave all of his wealth to the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam)? He said I left them Allah and his Messenger and that is why he is who he is. That is his insurance policy and aman the word in Arabic for insurance is the same root as imaan, they are from the same root istimaan. Yastaminu means to insure yourself but it also means to seek amaan and imaan is to make yourself safe. How? Not with Blue Cross or any cross. So it goes on. This is a great subject alhamdulillah.

The Nasiri Dua

O You to Whose mercy one flees! You in Whom the one in need and distress seeks refuge! O Master, You Whose pardon is near! O You Who help all who call on Him! We seek Your help, O You who help the weak!

You are enough for us, O Lord! There is nothing more majestic than Your immense power and nothing mightier than the might of Your force.

Kings are humbled to the might of Your domain and You lower or elevate whomever You wish.

The entire affair returns to You, and the release or conclusion of all matters is in Your hand.

We have presented our affair before You, and we complain to You of our weakness. Have mercy on us, O You Who know our weakness and continue to be merciful. Look at what we have experienced from people! Our state among them is as You see. Our troops are few and our wealth is little. Our power has declined among groups. They have weakened our solidarity and strength and diminished our numbers and our preparation. O You Whose kingdom cannot be pillaged, give us shelter by Your rank which is never overcome!

O Succour of the poor, we trust in You! O Cave of the weak, we rely on You! You are the One on Whom We call to remove our adversities, and You are the One we hope will dispel our sorrows. You have such concern for us that we cannot hope for protection which comes through any other door. We rush to the door of Your bounty and You honour the one You enrich by Your gift.

You are the One Who guides when we are misguided.

You are the One who pardons when we slip. You have full knowledge of all You have created and encompassing compassion, mercy and forbearance. There is no one in existence more lowly than we are nor poorer and more in need of what You have than us.

O you of vast kindness! O You Whose good encompasses all mankind, and no other is called on! O Saviour of the drowning! O Compassionate! O rescuer of the lost! O Gracious Bestower! Words are lacking, O

Hearing, O Answerer!

The cure is difficult, O Swift! O Near! To you, our Lord, we have stretched out our hands and from You, our Lord, we hope for kindness.

Be kind to us in what You decree and let us be pleased with what pleases You. O Allah, change the state of hardship for ease and help us with the wind of victory.

Give us victory over the aggressors and contain the evil among those who asked for it. Overpower our enemy, O Mighty, with a force which disorders them and crushes them. Overturn what they desire and make their efforts fail, defeat their armies and unsettle their resolve. O Allah, hasten Your revenge among them

They cannot stand before Your power. O Lord, O Lord, Our protection is by Your love, and by the might of Your help. Be for us and do not be against us. Do not leave us to ourselves for a single instant. We have no power of defence nor have we any device to bring about our benefit. We do not aim for other than Your noble door, we do not hope for other than Your encompassing bounty. Minds only hope for Your blessing by the simple fact that you say 'Be" and it is. O Lord, O Lord, arrival is by You to what You have and seeking the means is by You! O Lord, You are our high pillar of support! O Lord, You are our impregnable fortress. O Lord, O Lord, give us security when we travel and when we remain. O Lord, preserve our crops and herds, and preserve our trade and make our numbers more!

Make our land a land of the deen and repose for the needy and the poor. Give us force among the lands as well as respect, impregnability and a polity. Appoint it its might from the protected secret, and grant it protection by the beautiful veiling.

By sad, qaf and nun, place a thousand veils in front of it. By the rank of the light of Your noble Face and the rank of the secret of Your immense kingdom, And the rank of 'la ilaha illa'llah' and the rank of the Best of Creation, O our Lord, And the rank of that by which the Prophets prayed to You and the rank of that by which the Awliya' pray to you, And the rank of the power of the Qutb and the Awtad and the rank of the Jaras and Afrad, And the rank of the Akhyar

and the rank of Nujaba' and the rank of the Abdal and the rank of the Nuqaba',

And the rank of every one worshipping and doing dhikr and the rank of everyone praising and giving thanks, And the rank of everyone whose worth You elevated both those who are concealed and those whose renown has spread, And the ranks of the firm ayats of the Book and the rank of the Greatest Supreme Name, O Lord, O Lord, make us stand as fuqara' before You, weak and lowly.

We call to You with the supplication of the one who calls on a noble Lord who does not turn aside those who call. Accept our supplication with Your pure grace, with the acceptance of someone who sets aside the fair reckoning.

Bestow on us the favour of the Generous, and show us the kindness of the Forbearing.

O Merciful, extend Your mercy over us and spread Your blessing over us, O Generous. Choose for us in all our words and select for us in all our actions. O Lord, make it our habit to cling and devote ourselves to the resplendent Sunna.

Confine our manifold desires to You and grant us full and complete gnosis. Combine both knowledge and action for us, and direct our hopes to the Abiding Abode. O Lord, make us follow the road of the fortunate and make our seal the Seal of the martyrs, O Lord!

Make our sons virtuous and righteous, scholars with action and people of good counsel. O Allah, remedy the situation of the people and, O Allah, make the reunification easy. O Lord, grant Your clear victory to the one who takes charge and empowers the Deen, And help him, O You Who are forbearing, and help his party and fill his heart with what will make him pleasing to you. O Lord, help our Muhammadan deen, and make it end mighty as it began.

Preserve it, O Lord, through the preservation of the scholars, and raise the minaret of its light to heaven. Pardon, grant well-being, make up for our deficiency and forgive our sins and the sins of every

Muslim, O our Lord.

O Lord, bless the Chosen one with your perfect prayer of blessing.

Your prayer is that which grants success in his business as befits his lofty worth. Then bless his noble family and glorious Companions and those who have followed them.

Praise belongs to Allah by whose praise those with an aim completely fulfil that aim.

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/Success-In-this-World-and-the-Next#sthash.v5AYhQUS.dpuf>

Transcript for Springs Gift - Poem by Sh Hamza

Transcript Details

Event Name: Springs Gift - Poem by Sh Hamza

Transcript Author: IQRA Magazine

Description:

Date Transcribed: 3/1/2009 12:00:00 AM

Original URL: <http://www.docstoc.com/docs/25806680/IQRA-Magazine-Mar-09>

I envy the sand that met his feet
I'm jealous of honey he tasted sweet
Of birds that hovered above his head
Of spiders who spun their sacred web
To save him from his enemies
I envy clouds formed from the seas
That gave him cover from the heat
Of a sun whose light could not compete
With his, whose face did shine so bright
That all was clear in blinding night
I envy sightless trees that gazed
Upon his form completely dazed
Not knowing if the sun had risen
But felt themselves in unison
With those who prayed, and fasted too
Simply because he told them to

With truth and kindness, charity
From God who gave such clarity
His mercy comes in one He sent
To mold our hearts more heaven bent
I envy all there at his side
Who watched the turning of the tide
As truth prevailed and falsehood fled
And hope restored life to the dead
Men and Women through him found grace
To seek together God's noble face
I envy the cup that gave him drink
His thoughts that helped us all to think
To be one thought that passed his mind
Inspiring him to act so kind
For me this world is not one jot
If I could simply be a thought
From him to God throughout the ages
As revelation came in stages
I pity all who think it odd
To hear him say there is one God
Or he was sent by God to men
To hone their spirits' acumen
It's pride that blinds us from the sight
That helps good men to see his light
He taught us all to be God's slaves

And he will be the one who saves
Humanity from sinful pride
Muhammad has God on his side
So on this day be blessed and sing
For he was born to grace our Spring
With lilies, flowers, life's rebirth
In a dome of green like his on earth

A Tree Knelt In Praise

I know that I shall never see
A poem that bows quite like our tree
A tree who like us loved to pray
In adoration every day

A tree who humbly knelt in praise
To God and never chose to raise
Itself above the other trees
Instead remained as if on knees

A tree who gave our scholars shade
And never asked that it be paid
A tree whose needles never hurt
But gently fell upon the dirt

A tree whose worth cannot be told
Or ever lent or bought with gold
A tree who showed us all its height
With God by bowing with delight

It taught us all to clearly see
A Garden lies beneath a tree
And then it showed us with a sigh

That trees, like us, must also die

In an age of folly, play and mirth
A tree has died with brow on earth

-Hamza Yusuf / March 2005

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/Springs-Gift-Poem-by-Sh-Hamza#sthash.vGoFWTdN.dpuf>

Transcript for San Jose Mercury News: Article on Terrorism

Transcript Details

Event Name: San Jose Mercury News: Article on Terrorism

Transcript Author: RICHARD SCHEININ

Description:

Date Transcribed: 9/16/2001 12:00:00 AM

Original URL: <http://www.uga.edu/islam/hamza.html>

BY RICHARD SCHEININ San Jose Mercury News, Published Sunday, Sept. 16, 2001

Tuesday's terrorist attacks have saddened and maddened millions -- and raised questions for many about Islam. Speculation abounds that the hijackers were inspired by terrorists like Osama bin Laden, who teach that violent acts can pave the way to paradise.

But what does Islam really say about such matters? About jihad and martyrdom?

We asked Hamza Yusuf, an Islamic scholar in the East Bay, who said the attackers were ``enemies of Islam." Not martyrs, but ``mass murderers, pure and simple."

Yusuf, whose articles about Islam are published internationally, talked about the attacks, the hysteria that he fears could grip the United States, and the role that Muslims and others must play in opposing violence. ``We've got to get to some deeper core values that are commonly shared," he said.

Question: Why would anyone do what the hijackers did?

Answer: Religious zealots of any creed are defeated people who lash out in desperation, and they often do horrific things. And if these people indeed are Arabs, Muslims, they're obviously very sick people and I can't even look at it in religious terms. It's politics, tragic politics. There's no Islamic justification for any of it. It's like some misguided Irish using Catholicism as an excuse for blowing up English people. They're not martyrs, it's as simple as that.

Question: Because?

Answer: You can't kill innocent people. There's no Islamic declaration of war against the United States. I think every Muslim country except Afghanistan has an embassy in this country. And in Islam, a country where you have embassies is not considered a belligerent country.

In Islam, the only wars that are permitted are between armies and they should engage on battlefields and engage nobly. The Prophet Muhammad said, ``Do not kill women or children or non-combatants and do not kill old people or religious people," and he mentioned priests, nuns and rabbis. And he said, ``Do not cut down fruit-bearing trees and do not poison the wells of your enemies."

The Hadith, the sayings of the Prophet, say that no one can punish with fire except the lord of fire. It's prohibited to burn anyone in Islam as a punishment. No one can grant these attackers any legitimacy. It was evil.

Question: What role should American Muslims have in opposing this brand of violent Islam?

Answer: I think that the Muslims -- and I really feel this strongly -- have to reject the discourse of anger. Because there is a lot of anger in the Muslim communities around the world about the oppressive conditions that many Muslims find themselves in. But we have to reject the discourse of anger and we have to move to a higher moral ground, recognizing that the desire to blame others leads to anger and eventually to wrath, neither of which are rungs on a spiritual ladder to God. It's times like these that we really need to become introspective.

The fact that there are any Muslims -- no matter how statistically insignificant their numbers -- who consider these acts to be religious acts is in and of itself shocking. And therefore we as Muslims have to ask the question, ``How is it that our religious leadership has failed to reach these people with the true message of Islam?" Because the acts of these criminals have indicted an entire religion in the hearts and minds of millions.

These people are so bankrupt that all they have to offer is destruction.

Question: Why do some people regard the hijackers as martyrs?

Answer: That's an abomination. These are mass murderers, pure and simple. It's like Christians

in this country who blow up abortion clinics or kill abortion doctors. I don't think anyone in the Christian community, except a very extreme fringe, would condone that as an acceptable Christian response. In the same way, there's no Muslim who understands his religion at all who would condone this.

One of the worst crimes in Islam is brigandry -- highway robbery, or today we'd say armed robbery -- because it disrupts the sense of well-being and security among civilians.

Question: Suicide bombers have cited a Koranic verse that says, ``Think not of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance in the presence of their Lord."'

Answer: That is meant for people who are legitimately defending the lands of Islam or fighting under legitimate state authority against a tyrannical leader. There is no vigilantism in Islam. Muslims believe in the authority of government.

Imam Malik, an early Islamic legal authority, said that 60 years of oppression under an unjust ruler is better than one hour of anarchy.

Question: Then why is there such strong support in parts of the world for the attacks?

Answer: Because we're dealing in an age of ignorance and an age of anomie, the loss of social order. And people are very confused and they're impoverished. What Americans are feeling now, this has been business as usual for Lebanese people, Palestinian people, Bosnian people.

Question: What about Israeli people?

Answer: Certainly the fear element is there for Israeli people -- that's true, and the terror that they've felt. And there are still a lot of Jewish people alive who remember the fear and terror of what happened in Europe, so that's not far from people's memories.

It seems at some point, the cycles of violence have to stop. It's a type of insanity, especially when we're dealing with nuclear power. People are saying that this was an attack on civilization -- and that is exactly the point. And I think the question we all have to ask is whether indiscriminate retaliation is going to help preserve civilization.

The perpetrators of this and, really, all acts of terror are people who hate too much. There's a verse in the Koran that says do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Being just is closer to piety.

The evil of wrath is that justice and mercy are lost.

Question: How do you explain Palestinians and others celebrating the attacks in the streets?

Answer: When you see ignorant people in the streets, rejoicing -- the Prophet condemned it. It's rejoicing at the calamities of your enemies, and Islam prohibits that.

They do have a lot of anger toward America, because America produces much of Israel's military hardware and so many American tax dollars go to support Israel. You have a lot of animosity in the Arab world. But the vast majority of Arabs are horrified by what's happened.

Question: The concept of jihad has been widely used to justify violence.

Answer: Jihad means struggle. The Prophet said the greatest jihad is the struggle of a man against his own evil influences. It also refers to what Christians call a "just war," which is fought against tyranny or oppression -- but under a legitimate state authority.

Question: What is the Arabic word for martyr?

Answer: Shaheed. It means witness. The martyr is the one who witnesses the truth and gives his life for it. There are people in this country like Martin Luther King who would be considered a martyr for his cause.

Also, if your home, your family, your property or your land or religion is threatened, then you may defend it with your life. That person is a martyr. But so is anybody who dies of terminal illness; it's a martyr's death. Because it's such a purification that whatever wrongs they once did, they're now in a state of purity.

And the greatest martyr in the eyes of God is the one who stands in the presence of a tyrant and speaks the truth and is killed for it. He is martyred for his tongue.

Question: What does Islam say about suicide?

Answer: Suicide is haram in Islam. It's prohibited, like a mortal sin. And murder is haram. And to kill civilians is murder.

Question: What is a martyr's reward?

Answer: The Prophet said that a martyr who dies doesn't have a reckoning on the Day of Judgment. It's an act through which he is forgiven. But the Prophet also said that there are people who kill in the name of Islam and go to hell. And when he was asked why, he said, ``Because they weren't fighting truly for the sake of God."

If there are any martyrs in this affair it would certainly be those brave firefighters and police that went in there to save human lives and in that process lost their own.

Richard Scheinin can be contacted at (408) 920-5069 or by e-mail at rscheinin@sjmercury.com.

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/San-Jose-Mercury-News-Article-on-Terrorism#sthash.z5zPzDtR.dpuf>

Transcript for Rethinking Reform

Transcript Details

Event Name: Rethinking Reform

Transcript Author: Organization

Description: The Rethinking Islamic Reform organization transcribed their own event. Better to follow the link above, as their website has everything formatted nicely.

Date Transcribed: 1/1/2010 12:00:00 AM

Original URL: <http://www.rethinkingislamicreform.co.uk/transcript>

Rethinking Islamic Reform conference on behalf of **Oxford University Islamic society.**

SHAYKH HAMZA YUSUF HANSON KEYNOTE ADDRESS

SHAYKH HAMZA YUSUF HANSON: Bismillah al-Rahman Al-Rahim. Allahumma salli wa sallim 'alaa Sayyidina Muhammad wa 'ala alihi wa sahbihi wa sallim tasleeman katheera. Wa la hawla wa la quwwata illa billah al 'aliy al 'adheem In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate and peace and prayers be upon the prophets of God and upon our prophet Muhammad. Alhamdulilah. #00:16:25-9#

YUSUF*[1]: I'm going try to address each one of these points that I've been asked to address but before that I would like to preface my remarks by talking about a specific problem that we have when we look at the Islamic tradition, when we look at Islam as a faith and when we are addressing an audience that contains both peoples from the Islamic faith of various obvious types and backgrounds and then of western people. In science, you have what are called 'non-complementary paradigms' and to give an example of that, Newtonian Physics is a certain way of viewing the world and it works at a certain level, but if you attempt to apply Newtonian Physics to Quantum Mechanics, it doesn't work - you have a non-complementary system attempting to address things that are very different and need a different language to describe them and a different theoretical basis to make sense of them. **In many ways, the post-industrial, increasingly post-modern Western Liberalism is akin to Quantum Mechanics and the Islamic tradition is more akin to Newtonian Physics; and so when the two of us attempt to talk, we're speaking completely different languages and it really creates a massive barrier.**

YUSUF: Let me give you one example: one of the fundamental premises of the Islamic tradition is that human activity has metaphysical impact; that what we do in the world is actually reflected

back to us through the world, so natural disasters are not seen as events that happen because of tectonic plate shifts but there's actually a relationship between human behaviour and between what is happening in the world. For many, many western peoples now, that idea is a quaint, superstitious, historical idea from a previous time; something very difficult for western peoples to actually relate to. One of the problems with that idea however, and I do put this caveat, is that many Muslims will use that as a way of pointing the finger at people and saying "this is why it's happening! You're an evil person and therefore God is zapping you!" That is also a major problem because there is nothing in the Islamic tradition that permits one to do that, because it is arrogating to one's self the judgment of God and that is simply not in the realm of a human being to do and that's a very important point.

Another*[2] aspect that is very difficult for western peoples to relate to is the fact that the primary texts of Islam are fourteen hundred years old and it is very difficult for western people to understand how you can use a text that was written fourteen hundred years ago to have anything to do with modern legislation. This seems really quite incomprehensible for many people and - to give you an example - **in the United States, we have a two-hundred year old document (it's actually older than two hundred years) but we have a document that is a little older than two hundred years called the Constitution** *[3]. **It's the basis our legal system!**

In the arguments that we have in the United States of America, we have arguments around what they call 'strict construction' and 'loose construction' - how we interpret the constitution - 'originalism' versus a 'living constitution', the idea of what's called 'textualism' in our tradition, 'intentionalism' - what was the intent of the framers when they said these things? Should we base it on their intent even though they were speaking two-hundred years ago in a very different context? Or is it a 'living constitution' that can be re-interpreted based on the changes of time? The founding fathers didn't really leave a lot of explanation about how they wanted it to be understood, although there are some remarks - Thomas Jefferson said that "you can't expect an adult to wear the coat of a child" and "countries grow, and therefore our understanding will grow and there needs to be changes" but he also said "but don't allow the constitution to be wax" in the hands of the government to where they can shape it to fit the way they want. **This dilemma that exists in the United States is very similar to the dilemma that Muslims are going through today. There are many Muslims that are arguing for a 'living' Qur'an as opposed to a type of textual approach or an intentionalist approach to the Qur'an: how do we interpret the Qur'an in the light of modern society?** #00:21:23-5#

Now, the reason that I really wanted to drive that point home is because **the problems of Law and language are perennial problems. We still study Plato because Plato raises questions which are still pertinent to people living today;** we still study Aristotle because Aristotle also addresses issues that are pertinent to people today and so in light of looking at the past to

illuminate the present, I would like to honour a graduate of Oxford and an Oxford don who I really like, and that is the great Arnold Toynbee. Arnold Toynbee studied at Balliol College (and I'm speaking about Arnold J. Toynbee, not the great economist of the 19th century who also has that same name). Arnold Toynbee wrote an essay in 1947 called - he wrote a series of essays in a book called *Civilisation On Trial*.

One of the things that he said in that book*[4] is that when civilisations are confronted with challenges, they tend to respond in different ways and their responses will determine their success or their failures; but he said **one of the common characteristics of a civilisation when they're under great stress is to find what he called 'bug-bears' - people to blame for their problems** - and he mentions now the capitalist west, it uses communism: he said "in the divided world of 1947, communism and capitalism are each performing this insidious office for one another. **Whenever things go awry in circumstances that seem ever more intractable, we tend to accuse the enemy of having sewn tears in our field and thereby implicitly excuse ourselves for the faults of our own husbandry. This is of course an old story; centuries before communism was heard of, our ancestors found their bug-bear in Islam. As lately as the 16th century, Islam inspired the same hysteria in western hearts as communism in the 20th century.**"

It's very interesting in this same essay he actually argues that Islam is also going to become a problem again and he address what is very fascinating to me; the fact that Islam *[5] is 'up against the wall' these of the western civilisation, and because it's up against the wall it responds in one of two ways. He calls one of the responses 'herodianism' and the other 'zealotism.' Herodianism, he said is mimicry; it's attempting to find the secret of the people that have conquered you and to become like them: this is the Japanese response to the post-world war situation, where the Japanese now have better Rock and Roll than the Americans! They can imitate Elvis Presley - even their Prime Minister when he came to America, he wanted to go to Graceland! That was the first place that he asked George Bush to go to and he actually did go and visit because apparently he is a great fan of Elvis. They have some of the finest classical musicians... This is very common for conquered peoples to imitate those who have conquered them. This is why Native Americans are often the last people to wear cowboy clothes; literally wearing the Levis and the cow - they will embellish it with traditional beads and things but this is something that happens.

But he says that the other response is 'zealotism', which is an attempt to fall back on the past in this rigid nostalgic structure and he identifies **three places*[6]_where he feels that this will be the biggest problem for the west in dealing with the Muslims: Saudi-Arabia, Afghanistan and Yemen**; and it's quite stunning that he did this in 1947, and I would attribute that to the Oxford education! (laughing). #00:25:28-1# So, we're looking forward to such prescient

understandings of the future from these young Muslims that are coming out of here. But one of the things that he says is that the problem with Herodianism, is that the mimicry is always pale imitation; they can never become really as 'good' as those that they are trying to imitate and he says that the problem with Zealotism is that it is invariably a dead end and it comes to a failure.

Now, in terms of looking at Islamic reform today, I have a problem a word and I clarified it with Dr. Ramadan and the word that he understands will form is 'Islah' in Arabic, which is a good Arabic term. 'Islah' is the idea of rectifying something after it's corrupted, and it's a good word because the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, actually used that word when he said 'blessed are the strangers' - and he was asked who the strangers were, and he said 'they are people who rectify my 'Sharia' (my way) after people have corrupted it.' So he said: 'Al-latheena yuslihuna shariati ba'da ma afsadaha an-nas'. The importance of that tradition is two things that can be immediately gleamed from it: one is that his Shar'ia does get corrupted by his own testimony - that it can be misunderstood; it can be - it can deviate from its original intentions, but then the other thing is the need for people to rectify it, this 'islah' - this idea of rectifying it.

Now*[7], for me with the language 'reform' is that it is more of a Christian term coming out of the Protestant Reformation, which was a response to the abuses - and I know it's the most radical of the Protestant Reformation came out of Switzerland, so you know...[AUDIENCE LAUGHTER] #00:27:28-2# Zwingli was actually more radical than Martin Luther, but the end was the banking state of Switzerland and this is often the danger of reformations because there is a wonderful statue of Calvin in Geneva because the bankers love the fact that the protestants allowed for usury, whereas the Catholics opposed usury and now we're living in a world that is economically disintegrating before our eyes because of this hegemonic banking madness that is out of hand. But, the idea of 'reform' - Islamic Reform is an old idea and the idea of using a language that comes out of another set of historical problems for me, is problematic.

My own teacher, SHAYKH Abdullah Bin Bayyah we spoke about this, I asked him and he speaks French and he knows the history of the reformation and the use of the term, and he said that he preferred the word 'renovation,' and used that as French, because it's closer to the idea of 'tajdeed'. The idea of reformation - because **reformation can be a complete restructuring of something, whereas in the Islamic tradition the idea is that the house is of fundamentally of sound - it's of sound foundation, but it often needs renovating**: sometimes the faucets aren't working anymore, the water's not flowing, people aren't getting fresh air because the window can't be opened; so you need people to come in and renovate the house, and this is the idea.

Now*[8]_this process has been going on for centuries; there's than idea like "What's wrong with the Muslims? Why won't they change?" **If you look at the Muslims today, the Muslims of the 19th century would not recognise the Muslims of today.** The radical changes that have

occurred in the Muslim world in the last thirty years, let alone the last hundred years are beyond belief. If you look at Arabic culture and the fact that MTV, there is a Muslim version - well not a Muslim but an Arabic version of MTV which is as racy as the MTV that people experience in the western hemisphere. Now people like Osama Bin Laden who turns that on and sees that, literally will pull their beards out! [AUDIENCE LAUGHTER] because it's incredibly traumatic to see something like that happening in their culture. The Arabs pride themselves on what called 'gheerah'. In Urdu, it's translated as 'ghayrat' . Urdu people say that's where the Arabs got it from, but it's actually the other way around! [AUDIENCE LAUGHTER] #00:30:15-5#

'Gheerah' is the concept of - it's a type of jealousy. It's the idea of coveting something so much that you're willing to fight for it. I don't think people in the west can really appreciate any more the degree to which this virtue in Islamic and Arabic tradition is still upheld. I certainly believe that that was a far more dominant virtue in the 19th century in the west, but it's certainly something - now it's a very live and let live attitude; and there are reasons for that. **Two world wars in Europe have led to a certain way of looking at the world. The crisis that happened in the west because of a hundred and eighty million people dying - we tend to want the Muslim world to 'catch up' with us. "What's wrong with you? Why can't you catch up with us?" And yet we don't realise that we have been through, in the west, so much trauma to get to this point that we're at, and the Muslim world had a different set of historical traumas, much of it in fact a result of colonialism. So we have very different historical circumstances.**

Now, in terms of what is legitimate renovation*[9]_or 'tajdeed', I would argue that the Islamic tradition is a vast tradition. The Islamic tradition is largely un-read. Even people now that are studying in 'madrasahs', studying at Shar'ia colleges do not go deeply into this tradition. This is simply a fact. One of the things - I'll give you one example. When I wrote a paper on female prayer, because this was an issue a few years ago, years ago when I was a student in Mauritania, I remembered in a book that Ibn Ayman from the Malaki madhab considered female prayers was permissible, and I remember as a twenty-one year old student underlining that; and I actually went back to the book and found my underlining of that statement. When I studied the prayer issue, I was so stuck by the fact that not only was it debated early on, but there were multiple opinions. Imam Tabari considered it permissible for women to lead the prayer if they were more qualified than men - to lead men in prayer. Ibn Taymiyah himself permitted women to lead men in prayer if they were illiterate and she was literate. He just said that she should lead from the back because she might distract the men if she was leading from the front. Ibn Taymiyah! Permitting a woman to lead men in prayer! #00:33:11-3#

This is the tradition, it's all there. People have no idea how many of these issues were already examined and discussed, and erudition and energy went into this so if you look, **I would**

argue*[10] that the Islamic tradition has within itself all of the needs to renovate the house, but it's going to take an immense amount of intellectual energy, it's going to take very highly qualified people which necessitates institutions that can train and produce the types of people that are needed to engage in this activity.

‘Usul ul –fiqh’, which is one of the great - it is essence the philosophy of legislation in the Islamic tradition - much of the Qur'an and the hadith is in fact closer to what we would call 'constitutional Law' in the west. It's not Statute Law. **The Prophet, peace be upon him, gives far more constitutional expressions in legal injunctions than he ever gives cut and dry statute law - 'do this, don't do that.' He leaves things open.** There's an immense amount of ambiguity in the hadiths; this was known early on. There are very few verses of the Qur'an and hadith that are considered as what is known as ‘qat’iatil dilala’, which is where the understanding of the expression is absolute; that we know exactly what it means. It often holds two, three, four, five, six meanings and you get all these multiple interpretations.

The other thing that is so extra-ordinary about our early scholars is that they were very well aware of what we would call 'fallibalism' - that they were not dictating 'God's Law' in their jurisprudence. They were dictating the ‘mujtahid’ or the individual's understanding of God's Law. In fact even Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziya in I'laam ul Muwaqqi'een has a chapter entitled "The Prohibition of Calling a Fatwa 'The Ruling of God' ". The Prohibition of Calling a Fatwa the Ruling of God! The ‘fatwa’ is a personal opinion of a ‘mujtahid’ in attempting to understand the intention of a text.

Moreover, the fatwa was known and understood to be specific in many cases to time and place. This is another aspect of fatwa's that are rarely understood even amongst people that are trained in classical Islamic education. The Hanafi*[11] school believes that the place actually affects the ruling, even though the other schools do not in the Sunni tradition. So if you're in England, there are certain rulings that would be permissible here that might not be permissible in another place. Other scholars argue 'no', but these are the differences of opinion and nuances - this is another aspect - **the Muslims have always recognised diversity and differences of opinion, but we have what are called ‘thawabit’ and ‘mutaghayyirat’ in our Islamic tradition. The ‘thawabit’ are things that do not change: they cannot be reformed.** One of them is our basic understanding of God, our basic understanding of Prophecy, our basic understanding of eschatology, of what happens after life; these things are fixed and eternal, they do not change with time and place. God is all powerful, omniscient. He speaks and he has no gender even if we use gender language to express the divine by the limitations of language, but Muslim theologians were always clear that there was no gender to God - God is neither male nor female. Transcendent. #00:37:00-7#

YUSUF: So that aspect cannot change. What changes then? The changes are our understanding, but*[12] those understandings have to be based on following rigorous principles. The first and foremost is they have to be within the context of the language in which the revelation was revealed and this is why, as opposed to living constitution, the idea that the language and the intent of the framers of the constitution have no relevance to us today - this is a debate - this is a very important departure for the vast majority of Muslims with certain reformist movements today, the idea that somehow we can reinterpret the Qur'an in the light of 21st century language. The Qur'an was written in Arabic of the 7th century. That Arabic was preserved to a degree by only people who really have studied this tradition understand. It is one of the great human achievements, the preservation of the Arabic language; the exact meanings of every single word that is recorded in the Qur'an, of all the words that are recorded in the hadiths and having to prove what those words mean, and on rare occasion saying 'we can't ascertain the exact meaning of this word, or the multiple possible meanings' like the word 'ib' which is in Surat 'Abasa. So the Muslim jurists traditionally believed that you cannot go outside of the language; you were confined by the language.

PART II

Now, the other aspect of this which is very important is that they were always aware of the ambiguous nature of language; that the Qur'an is open to multiple interpretations and multiple meanings and will be until the end of time. Verses can be re-interpreted in the light of new knowledge and have and will continue to be. **So the Islamic reform or 'tajdeed' that's happened in the past, we have many, many examples of that but I would look at a few that occurred in the 19th of century - in the late 19th century with the colonial incursions there became a response to the *[13] Western colonisation of the Muslim countries:**

Some of those responses involved attacking Muslim spirituality because they believed (like Muhammad Abdu and others), they believed that the Muslims were far too 'otherworldly' - that the Sufi's had taken hold of their understanding to such a degree that they really forgot about the world itself! So the emphasis then was to focus on the political and economic dimensions that had been ignored for so long; and so you've got these reformist movements that were essentially political and economic attempts at re-addressing the real problems in the Muslim world: Educational problems; the fact that things like engineering were so widely ignored; attempting to re-address the problems of Muslim Universities – Al-Azhar is a good example of that. Al-Azhar was traditionally only where people were trained in Islamic tradition and now it is a multi-dimensional, multi-faceted university. That was an attempt at reforming the problem of limiting to limiting Islamic universities simply to the subjects of Islamic tradition. Then you had the political movements of which Dr. Ramadan's grandfather was involved in on his maternal side, Hassan al Banna; who was part of that tradition of Rashid Rida, who was also one of the

reformist trends that occurred in the Muslim world, then Ben Badis who is affected by that in Algeria, so you have a complete reformist agenda in Algeria; and then you have Al al-Fassi in Morocco - these are all happening on top of the Wahhabbi reformist movement that was happening even earlier than that in the 1780's and 1790's, and then it's re-invigorated with King Abdul Aziz's conquest of the Arabian peninsula - **these are all attempts at Reform, of dealing with the collapse of the Muslim sovereignty and the Muslim ethos.**

One of the great traumas of the Muslim world was in 1924 when the Ottoman Caliphate officially dismantled. There was a conference in Mecca that was done to re-establish it; to appoint a new Caliph. The head of that conference was Muhammad Zawahiri, who was the grandfather of Ayman Zawahiri - the companion of Osama Bin Laden. He was the Shaykh Al-Azhar at the time. I mean, this is quite extra-ordinary - Ayman Thawahiri's grandfather on his maternal side wrote the Egyptian constitution! He was one of the most important people in designing the Egyptian constitution; he comes from a very traditional, very aristocratic Egyptian family. #00:42:08-6#

YUSUF: So, what happened between Muhammad Thawahiri and Ayman Thawahiri? I mean, how did that chasm occur to where you end up responding instead of the famous statement of Muhammad Thawahiri in 1924 after they couldn't elect a Caliph in Mecca he said "Let's do the Janazah prayer over" - which is the funeral prayer of the Muslims - "...over the nation of Islam." That was Muhammad Thawahiri, his grandfather's response to the inability to elect a Caliph.

Now*[14], what's happening now as you get this extra-ordinary post-modern environment that we're in now; where the internet has opened up extra-ordinary exchange of ideas and **you have many, many Muslims who have migrated to the west, have imbibed western liberalism, have imbibed many of the concepts of the west, they're struggling. There is a lot of soul-searching going on.** We have, for instance, Gay and Lesbian people in the United States - and I'm sure here - but in the United States we have Gay and Lesbian people who are born into Muslim families, that want a Gay and Lesbian Islam. They want an Islam that is big enough to include the Gay and Lesbian community, and so there is a movement now there. You have people like Irshad Manji who is also calling for this reform, the misunderstanding...I think, The Trouble With Islam today becoming a spokesman for a certain type of progressive movement

The question is 'Why*[15] is there so much distrust and trepidation by the Muslim grassroots?' I would say that the fundamental reason is that - Lord Cromer - and I don't know if he went to Oxford - but **Lord Cromer**, who was the governor of Egypt, a close friend of Muhammad Abdu's, **said a reformed Islam is not Islam. I would argue that that is true, and that's not true.** It's true in that the fundamental thrust of Islam is that it was a reformist

movement to begin with. Islam was re-addressing the problems that they saw inherent in Christianity; the sectarianism - people have no idea, the number of sects of Christians that existed in the Middle-East at that time: the Nestorians, the Jacobites, the Aryans, the Byzantine Orthodox, the Catholics - all of these different groups! The Mali Bari Nasrani's who are still in existence in India, had to flee to India, who were Semitic Christians like Ebunites - all of these differences; and also the Jewish rejection of Jesus. So the Prophet Muhammad saw himself as coming to really reform the Abrahamic tradition.

He put in place several constraints in his faith, and **also in the Qur'an you will find many verses warning not to change the faith. There are many warnings about this. One of the most fundamental concepts in Muslim consciousness is the idea of 'Bid'ah, is the idea of innovation - of changing the structure of things, and this is why the Muslims are very wary of messing with the calibration of this religion.** This is why when they see new ideas like this, they tend to react. This is the Grassroots of Muslims. This I do not believe will change for any time soon, I really don't. I think that you will find - and in the Muslim world this is particularly acute, far less so here I think; western Muslims are extremely tolerant of many diversion of opinions, even the spectrum of our understanding is quite broad in what we allow to go under the umbrella is much broader than in many places in the Muslim world; not all places, but in many places in the Muslim world. But the Muslims historically have been very tolerant of dissent.

YUSUF: **Now*[16], there is an argument here about British Islam, I wanted to talk about that and then make my closing remarks.** #00:46:19-0# There's an argument somehow that the British Muslims need to 'assimilate.' They need to 'fully become British' and there's this problem with multiculturalism; multiculturalism is threatening the cohesion of our society. I'm amazed by the idea of cohesion - I'd like to see it, where all this wonderful cohesion is! I think people who are in their seventies in this room can remember how "cohesive" neighbourhoods were sixty years ago/seventy years ago, they're much less so today; and I'm old enough to remember how my neighbourhood was and how my neighbourhood is today. So we have - **social fragmentation is a problem everywhere.** Now, the argument that America - and I find it extra-ordinary that Brits will tolerate this from your politicians! - of saying "Look at America! How cohesive they are! [AUDIENCE LAUGHTER] They all pledge allegiance to the flag, y'know they have Thanksgiving! Everybody has a national Turkey day, and y'know... why can't we have a national Pheasant day...? Or maybe that's too upper-crusty, maybe a national Shepherd's Pie day...?"

So, what's fascinating to me about this is first of all **America has always been a multicultural society, we have never been a cohesive society.** We have people in America that speak their own forms of English! Really! And British people would say we all speak our own form of English in America but (laughing) y'know... look... we have people - I can't understand them - we have a language called 'Ebonics'. We have a 'Gumbo' language - Jambalaya and a crawfish

pie and filet gumbo? 'cause tonight, I'm gonna meet, ma cher amio?" I mean, do you understand...? I don't understand it, it's a Hank Williams song... I mean he knew what it was about because it's a Louisiana dialect; I don't know what it is! And I'm sure you've got people up in Yorkshire that you can't tell what they're saying (laughing) y'know, but look, the reality of it is America - we have people in America driving around in buggies! In buggies! They're debating whether or not to put rubber tires on those buggies! That's what they're debating in their community, and I'm not making this up! America has - we have places in my state that says "Siabla Anglais." That means "We speak English here." I'm not making this up! We have seven generation Chinese in San-Francisco China Town that do not speak English. They have been in the United States for seven generations - this is America! **So this idea - this fantasy - that some of these British politicians have of bringing this 'wonderful cohesive America' over here? Good luck, my friends.** [AUDIENCE LAUGHTER] Seriously.

YUSUF: But one of the things that I love about England is that you've always tolerated eccentric uncles! Why can't you tolerate eccentric religions? Really! I mean, what's so wrong with that? This country was forged in religious wars; religious and tribal wars to a certain degree, it was forged in that - you've learned the lessons of those wars. **Britain is one of the most tolerant societies in the world, it really is!** [APPLAUSE] And like Dorothy Sayer - Dorothy Sayer is one of my favourite theologians - she's a mystery writer too, but she was a good theologian. Dorothy Sayer said 'the British people are slow to anger, but when they get angry they behave like fools,' and there's probably a lot of truth in that, but the fact that they're slow to anger; that's one of the most precious virtues in the Islamic tradition - 'hilm', which is the ability to fore-bear others; to be slow to anger. 00:50:22-3

YUSUF: In terms*[17] of what role should governments play in Islamic reform, I would argue that governments are... one of the most important things that Muslim jurists attempted to address was the limits of government, and Muslims traditionally were very libertarian in their approach, they did not like - our jurists did not like - they didn't work for governments and we had a separation of powers in the sense that the legislative body was in the jurist and the jurists were independently working. Islamic Sharia arises completely independent of government support; the great jurists actually - Malik, Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, Abu Hanifa, Imam Shafi'i - all spent time in government jails; all of them, and these were the great founders of the Sunni tradition, and the Shi'a also have a tradition of persecution at the hands of government as well; in some ways far worse than anything the Sunnis ever suffered; so Muslim Jurists were always very wary of Government.

YUSUF: **One of the things about...nothing taints a reputation more in our community than an association with the government.** You lose your credibility. When I went into the White House, and I was just a guest, I wasn't...They didn't pay me, you know, I didn't get any money,

you know. Maybe I should have asked for something, because it just...[AUDIENCE LAUGHTER]. But that did more to tarnish my reputation amongst a large segment of the Muslim community, because **Muslims are very wary of any scholar who associates closely with the government, and they always have been. And there's a reason for that. Because governments never do that out of the graciousness of their goodwill. They co-opt** [APPLAUSE]. And when George Bush made a reference to 'we're not at war with Islam', the CNN camera immediately flashed on me [AUDIENCE LAUGHTER]. Which made me realise that was pre-planned. So, we do have a state press. You know...They called it Pravda in Russia, we call it CNN [AUDIENCE LAUGHTER] 00:52:41-8 But these are the problems that we have to deal with.

Now, **our Prophet said the worst scholars are those at the doors of rulers, and the best rulers are those at the doors of scholars.** My own teacher Shaykh Abdullah bin Baya said the first is restricted, and the second is absolute. What that means in 'usuli' language is that **the first is not an absolute statement because it's dependent on the intention of the scholar.** When the Prophet said the worst scholars are those at the doors of the governments, wanting some personal gain from them. If they go there for the sake of God to advise those governments, then they're not falling amongst the worst scholars. 00:53:24-2 This is the type of understanding that needs to translate.

Finally*[18] in conclusion, I would argue that some of the most important things that have to take place in the UK and in the United States, and really in Europe - we have now thirty million Muslims, in Western Europe, according to most statistics. We have probably between six to ten million Muslims in the United States. We have about three million Muslims I think in Canada...maybe two million in Canada. But we have close to five hundred thousand in Toronto. They make ten percent of the population in Toronto. In Philadelphia, America's first capital, we have ten percent Muslims now. In New York City, the Eid where the...The City Council of New York voted to make the Eid holiday a holiday in the city of New York, largely because twelve percent of Muslim children in the New York City school district are Muslim. Twelve percent. That's the largest city in the United States of America, and twelve percent of its children in its public school system are Muslim. 00:54:39-9

This is an immense opportunity, but it's also a crisis, and we know that in the Chinese ideogram means both crisis and opportunity. It's a crisis if we don't somehow come to terms with the fact Muslims do not have the intellectual tools to navigate their religion in uncharted waters, such as these that you are in now. If these tools are not presented in an intelligent way, that's rooted and founded in the Islamic tradition, then we have a very serious problem.

And*[19] this problem right now we're only seeing slight externalities, and I'll use that term... 'Externality', as you know is...a negative externality of a corporation is the toxic by-products that come out of it. So like, BP, the positive thing was drilling the well; the negative externality is the fact the well didn't work out. Well, religions have negative externalities as well. Things go wrong. People go wrong. We have Muslims that are negative externalities for the social body. Now, people leave it up to BP to deal with the problem, but sometimes the problem is bigger than BP. Sometimes you do need governments to come in.

When the FBI came to me - not to question me, they never came to question me (AUDIENCE LAUGHTER). I mean they have at the airport at things, but not...but they never came to my house to question me like was reported in the press. And Dr. Ramadan knows about press. I don't believe press anymore. Because once you read about yourself in the press you know it's just rubbish [APPLAUSE]. And Wikipedia...my goodness, you know [AUDIENCE LAUGHTER]. 01:04:20-1 **So, the FBI...I said, look. My wish, you know, really, is you guys get it right. Really. This is a criminal problem. These are criminals, and they need to be stopped.**

Extremism is as American as apple pie. We have extreme sports. We jump off buildings, you know, with bungee ropes and things. We have extreme eating. We had a woman die recently in a water-drinking contest. We have hot-dog contests where they eat a hundred and fifty hot-dogs. People from Egypt would never do that, you know [AUDIENCE LAUGHTER]. We, we have extreme music. They used our music to torture people at Guantanamo Bay [AUDIENCE LAUGHTER]. Seriously. They used it to torture. In fact, the heavy metal bands actually protested against their music being used as torture [AUDIENCE LAUGHTER]. We have...extremism is as American as apple pie, really. **The problem is not extremism. Extremism is a human problem that has always been there, it will always be there. The problem is violence in a civil society. And this is what we need to address: the problem of violence.**

And*[20] at essence, **Islam is an irenic religion. It is a peaceful tradition. Our prophet was not a warmonger. He did not like war. He disdained war.** He said never hope to meet your enemies, but if you're forced to meet them be brave in the battle field. He prohibited the... [APPLAUSE]. 00:56:52-1 He prohibited the killing of civilians. He prohibited the killing of women and children. In the 'Maliki' fiqh that I studied, if you're...the only time that you can fight a woman is if she's a combatant on the other side. The Maliki jurists were so troubled by the hadith that they said, if you see a woman on the battlefield, run away from her [AUDIENCE LAUGHTER]. Because they did not want you to fall under that hadith because it's a 'mutawatir' hadith, it's a factual hadith that has the same strength as a verse in the Qur'an.

Now*[21], I want to close and end this is by saying one of the greatest problems is we have what I call Shaykh Googles'; 'Weekend Muftis'. We have now a loss of authority in our tradition. This has led to people like, what they call Shaykh bin Laden. Somebody called me up on a recent Arabic programme and said: 'What do you think of Shaykh Osama Bin Laden?' And I just said, first of all, what do you want from the question? Do you want me to be, if I answer 'oh, he's a great guy', to be in Guantanamo Bay tomorrow? [AUDIENCE LAUGHTER]. I mean, is that kind of the idea? Or, what you want is that, you know, I think he's terrible? But, who made him a Shaykh? Really. Who made Shaykh Osama bin Laden a Shaykh? Osama bin Laden is an accountant [APPLAUSE]. Ayman al-Zawahari was a paediatric surgeon. And these people are giving fatwa from caves in Afghanistan telling people to kill people. 00:59:24-7

Now,*[22] their fatwa is based on a famous fatwa from Mardin. The fatwa that killed Anwar El Sadat is the same fatwa. My Shaykh and teacher, Shaykh Abdullah bin Bayyah, recently held a conference in Turkey in the city of Mardin, which is where the fatwa, was..the fatwa was addressing an issue in that city. The fact that the ruler of that city was a Muslim but not applying Islamic law, and he was under the influence of the Moguls who were not Muslim at that time. He was asked, is this an abode of war or an abode of peace? He said, it's neither one or the other. It's a hybrid because it doesn't have the qualities of the abode of war; it doesn't have the qualities of the abode of peace. And then he said something very interesting. He said, therefore, the believer should be treated in accordance with the fact that he's a believer, and the disbeliever should be fought: 'yoqatalo al-kharij 'an al-sharia be-ma yastahiqoh'.The disbeliever should be fought because he's left the Sharia, and as he deserves to be. Now, Shaykh Abdullah bin Bayyah, when that fatwa was read in Mardin, he said that can't be right, the text.

The 'uluma' that were in the audience - some of them the biggest 'uluma' in the Muslim world -all said SHAYKH, don't change the fatwa. It's Shaykh al-Islam's fatwa. We can address the problems of the fatwa, but don't change the text of the fatwa. Shaykh Abdullah bin Bayyah insisted. He said, no. Something is wrong with that text. It doesn't work in the Arabic language like that. When he got back to Jeddah, he went to another text and found that it did not say that the one who left the Sharia should be fought. It actually said, instead of 'yoqatalo', it said, 'yo'amalo'. He should be treated in accordance with him being a disbeliever. In other words, there are many rules that relate to disbelievers. Then he asked for the oldest copy in the 'Zahiriyyah maktaba' in Damascus, and it came back saying, in fact, that he should be treated, not killed, or fought. That fatwa was published a hundred years ago and has been replicated in countless editions of his 'fatwas', saying that they should be fought. **That is the basis of Abdul Salam Faraj's 'fatwa' to kill Anwar El Sadat. It was the basis of bin Laden's fatwa to kill the Americans, and also to overthrow the house of Saud in Saudi Arabia. It's a misprint. They've based an entire philosophy on a misprint in a text that occurred a hundred years.**

This is a crisis in our community: the crisis of authority. Who can read these texts and who can determine what they mean? Thank you very much [APPLAUSE]. 01:02:12-3

Question / Answer

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

IMAD AHMED: Thank you very much professor Ramadan, you raised a number of fascinating points. Our time is short now so we are going to launch straight into the question and answer session. We are first going to take our questions from the floor. If you would like to ask a question, please raise your hand and one of the stewards will come to you with the microphone. So, do we have any questions on the floor? Can we have the gentleman here please? 00:50:27-7

QUESTION 1

DR SHEHAB, SAUDI ARABIA: Assalaamu alaikum. This question is to Ustadh Ramadan. I like what you said, but I need a plan. What you said is very good, but what is the plan to face the challenges and to teach the world of what you said about ethics and about... So we need a plan, not just to talk more and more. So i hope you have something to offer in the plan. 01:51:07-9

TARIQ RAMADAN: 01:51:27-1 I think that many things are already done in some fields, for example I will take the example as I said in medicine, that these councils where Muslim scholars of the text with medical doctors are working together and they are able *[55] to come with very interesting things on euthanasia and cloning and all that. What I would like is to open up and be effective on this and this is what I want to translate into councils where we are able to come with scholars that are dealing with the text, but more specialised issues. 01:51:51-9

And for example some of the economists - and once again on the knowledge of the world, we need sometimes people who are not Muslims, who are coming and sitting and they can come with for example this economy, from the east and from the west, sitting together. So I would say that we have to go a step further now. **It is time for us to call not just the scholars to do the job, but also to the Muslim communities - don't blame the authority when you are not playing the game,** you are not accountable, and you don't understand in which way you have...because we have lots of people in many fields.

For example, in education. That's very good. To think about Islamic schools, and that's fine. **Over the last 30 years for example, the Islamic schools are doing much better now than they did before - they are improving, but we need much more than that now. When we deal with acquisition *[56] of knowledge, and how do we deal with the surrounding**

world, in Muslim majority countries as well as here. So we need to have things on this where the Muslim scholars should be involved in this discussion, I think that the halal and haram business, was something which is far from - now we live in a very complex world, education is a very complex challenge now.

And women*[57], for example: I'm sorry you cannot just as Muslim scholars, sit as men together and ask for women to give you a report on the situation of women and say okay we are going to change the situation. So in many things we have to come back to the traditions, because many things are done today which are not respecting the Islamic tradition, from the very beginning. Even in our mosques there are things that are unacceptable, not because we are not dealing with the challenges of today, but because we are not respecting what is the Islamic tradition on the firsthand. [APPLAUSE] This is the first thing.

The second thing is really to have scholars and women coming also with this knowledge in our circles, where they can come with this and also understand things - you know - this is something which, we *[58] **are very much integrating in the West and you can show the people are very much integrating with the rate of divorces. This is where we are the best, and are coming very close to what is happening in the surrounding society.** But many Muslims are saying yes it means you are lost here, but in the Muslim majority countries, we don't have so many divorces. Ask yourself why? Is it because it's better? **Any one of us who is serious about the issue is just knowing that what is going on now in Muslim majority countries is also problematic when it comes to the way we deal with families and the way we deal with women.**

It's not for us to push to do it as it is done in the west, but to be critical enough to come to something which is how do we deal with the right status of women in our societies today? And it means not headscarf and not headscarf. For me it is clear, the headscarf is in the*[59] Islamic prescription, and after that it should be the right of the woman to wear it or not. This is her free choice. But it is an Islamic prescription and then you decide what you want to do. Now this is not the main concern. The main concern is how do you deal with the family, how do you deal with the husband, when you deal with the kids, how do you deal with your rights, how do you deal with the surrounding society and the public sphere. These are questions that are deeper than that, when you speak about something that is so obvious for us as Muslims you know same skills, same salary.

Let us come to this. Let us come to these deep discussions and not just following the footsteps of "Oh I want to please the west, and say OK remove the headscarf and show that you are liberal Muslims" - what's that? This is not reform. This is just an awareness. This is just silly. This is not what the Muslims need today.

AHMED: Thank you. 01:56:19-6

QUESTION 2

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Assalamu alaikum. If I could ask the question to both of you, that would be really helpful. How do Muslims have meaningful engagement with the government as active citizens in this country? I know you both touched on it but if you could elaborate, that would be very helpful. 01:56:27-1

AHMED: Thank you. Shaykh Hamza if we could start with you. 01:56:27-1

HAMZA YUSUF: Bismillah. The first thing is that the Muslim community has to understand the concept of citizenship. In the pre-modern tradition there wasn't a concept of citizenship. There was a concept of 'haakim' and 'mahkum', which is the ruler and the ruled. **So the idea that *[60] people that are under a government can actually participate in the framing of the government itself** is a relatively new idea itself, and Muslims in the west are learning this, I mean we now have, it's quite extraordinary, that there is a minister who is from a Muslim family, and some MP's who were elected in the recent election who are from Muslim families, so it is happening here in the UK. **But I would argue that the concept of 'muwaatana' which is citizenship, the idea that we are not a minority community in the ideal state of western understanding of citizenry, that we are actually fully enfranchised citizens and have all the rights and responsibilities that go with that citizenship - that has to be inculcated into our youth and into our communities.** I think the older generation are excused in my estimation, because they came from a very different background. But the younger generation really doesn't have an excuse. I think it's very important that they recognise the importance of fully integrating at that level.

For example in my country, in the United states, especially at local government, you can enact radical changes in your local governments. You can ban alcohol. You can ban gambling. You can do a lot of things. And Muslims, and I agree with Dr Ramadan fully on this, that **Muslims need to be productive members of their community. They really need to be engaging the community fully.**

One of the biggest problems *[61] that we have is the concept of 'al-walaa' and 'al-baraa'. The idea, of, there's a certain segment of the Muslim community that teaches this idea, that any allegiance, you have to have allegiance and enmity, allegiance to Islam alone, and enmity to anything other than Islam, and therefore to vote is an act of 'kufr' in a non-Muslim state. And we have people here that get public airspace to expound these ideas on a regular basis. **These ideas are sectarian and a very very marginalised view in Islamic**

history. Allegiance to a state is not kufr by any means, and Shaykh Abdullah bin Bayyah, argues that the classical formulation of what was called ‘dar al-harb’, ‘dar al-islam’ and ‘dar al-ahad’, or ‘muwada'ah’, those are the three classical formulations, the abode of war, the abode of peace which was the Islamic world, and then the abode where you had treaties with the people.

YUSUF: He argues that there is a new abode, which is what he calls the ‘dar al-muqam’, or the ‘dar al-muwatana’, which is the **abode of citizenship** *[62] , which is where Muslims are citizens. And a Muslim can technically become a Prime minister, or at least a President in the United States. And that was argued 200 years ago, it was actually in the constitutional debates, one of the issues raised was that if there were not religious tests, a Muslim could eventually be elected President in the United States. That was argued 200 years ago, by the founding fathers. And the argument was overridden because Iraton argued that if the American people elected a Muslim it would be for one of two reasons - either the Americans had all become Muslims, and then that was their democratic prerogative, and he said that's highly unlikely. And then he said, the other would be that they found in a Muslim all the virtues that they wanted to lead their society, and in that case again it was their prerogative. So they actually voted early on, based on a Muslim issue, so Barack *[63] Obama has a Muslim grandmother, and he is president of the United States. His grandmother was there, in hijab sitting next to him, at the inauguration.

So we now have a paternal side of the family in the white House that is Muslim. So I mean that is quite extraordinary as an event. And i think we can't underestimate the election of Barack Hussein Obama, because that election first of all signals that the name barrier no longer exists in the United States of America, so if your name is Mahmud or Hussein or Abdullah - it is not a barrier anymore. That is the first important hallmark. The second is that he does openly have Muslim relatives, and that is an incredible statement. And the third, and this is what I find most extraordinary, he is from the Lu'o tribe, in Kenya. In Kenya, had he ran for president of Kenya, he could not have been elected because of the tribe that he is from. And that is a fact that Fuad Nahdi will confirm. The Lu'o tribe is a weaker tribe. But he overcame tribe and race, in the United States and became President.

So I think it's very important for Muslims to recognise that we do have vital contribution. And finally in Manchester, Bradford, Sheffield, Birmingham, in these cities, we are moving into numbers of Muslims that **if the demographics are correct - and they often aren't - So I do put that caveat out, but if the demographics are correct, it won't be long before some of the largest cities*[64] in the United Kingdom have majority Muslim populations. The Muslims need to very seriously consider the fact that they will have to be running city councils, that they will have to have police stations that are under a Muslim constabulary, all these things really have to be taken into consideration.** And Muslims instead of rioting need to think seriously about establishing think tanks, where they can think seriously about their

presence in the United Kingdom, and in the United states, and in Canada, and in Germany and all of these places because we need to address these real issues and we need to alleviate the very serious and real fears, and it's not always phobia because phobia by, in a classical metaphysical definition is an irrational fear but the fear of Muslims is not necessarily irrational for many people: The high crime rates that are in our communities in Europe are cause for concern for many, many people in these countries so its very important that Muslims address these issues and one of the most important ways of doing that is through civic engagement.

RAMADAN: *[65] 02:03:23-9 Yes. I want to say something about this because I agree with Shaykh Hamza Yusuf about this, and I have been saying this for years now and I wrote the book 'To be a European Muslim' and said that we have to stop, the very understanding of citizenship is to stop speaking about minority and minority citizenship and not to put ourselves in a situation where we speak as a minority. When it comes to citizenship, of course a religious minority is there, but when we speak about citizenship, we have to be involved. Now the point is, I am not myself against anything that has to do with government, I have been sitting in many councils and committees with governments, and talking and listening and sharing views. But once again as i said, it is really to ask yourselves, what is the intention? What do we want to achieve? Because at the end of the day, you know, for example when I studied all of what was said by scholars about 'dar al-harb' and 'dar al-islam' and all that, I ended up saying that in the west and also in Muslim majority countries, we are facing something which is 'dar al-shahadah'. Meaning that we bear witness, in the sense that: li takunu shuhada 'al an-nas, in order for you to be a witness to your message before people. This is where the world is. I want to be a witness. So ask yourself what is the intention. 02:05:11-8

So there is something which is very problematic, is that some of the Muslims that are dealing with the governments are acting as though they are representing*[66] all the Muslims - and you are not. So first is to say that you are not representing all of the Muslims, and second is to ask yourself what is your role. And this is where the point is for me - the contribution. **An ethical contribution. It is to help the politicians and to help the government to come back to politics and not emotional politics *[67] and not racism, and not discrimination, but to just be there for all citizens.** And to be there for all the citizens, is just to be the witness of your message in the way you deal with politics. It doesn't mean you have to be naive and not to calculate, it means you have to be aware of the game and the rules of the game but at the same time, show in which way when you are dealing with the government: you don't represent the Muslims, and second you want to spread around a better understanding of what is happening at the grassroots level, and then to be able to say to the government that you don't only deal with the people you like, but you have to deal with all people. 02:06:20-4

And the last point is never let them think that you can be bought. And I'm sorry there are people working for the governments, getting money from the governments *[68] and the only thing they are doing is following exactly the agenda of the government, and I think these people are dangerous. 02:06:52-5

AHMED: Thank you Professor Ramadan. Our time is short, so can i ask that the questions are short and that the answers are a bit more condensed. Can I have one question from the gentleman in the leather jacket. 02:07:08-7

QUESTION 3

KASHIF ZAKI UDDIN, SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFIRCAN STUDIES: Assalaamu alaikum Shaykh Hamza and Professor Ramadan. My question is addressed to both of you. You both spoke of this notion in Islam of a 'thawabit'. Of constants or immutables within the Islamic tradition. How do you respond to those within the tradition and without the tradition who flag these 'thawabit' up, some of these immutables, as concepts as parts of the tradition which are *[69] incompatible with western liberal democracies. And how therefore do you see a way forward? Because ultimately, often Islamic reform is seen as a means to further integration, and these are flagged up from both sides of the divide as impediments to achieving this goal.

YUSUF: 02:08:07-6 I would say first of all. The area that is problematic, is what is known as 'ahkam al-sultaniyya', which are the governmental categories and the penal code. There are issues about sexual morality, homosexuality and also women's rights that are seen as problematic. The inheritance laws in the Quran are one of the few times where the Quran is very explicit about who gets what. And that's difficult. Although there are some arguments even in juristic preference that some of the Usooli scholars have made of late, arguing other types of distribution that is not incongruous with what the Quran says. I would say that the prophet (saw) stated very clearly that the political tradition of his faith would dissipate very rapidly after 30 years and I think Muslims tend to forget that. That **this so called Islamic state has not existed in the history of Islam. And I think that it is a political fantasy that a lot of Muslims hold.** 02:09:16-9

And so I think a lot of those areas are not dissimilar to the Jewish orthodox community and other religious communities that have pre-modern aspects of their tradition that are not compatible with western liberal democracy. And I think it is important that Muslims don't waffle on those issues, and they should state them as they are. And **simply, we believe this is a revelation, and there are certain things that are prohibited,** In the Quran homosexuality, acting on it is prohibited in the Quran *[70] - the impulses that people have, that was addressed in our book centuries ago, the prayer of person known as a 'ma'boon', a person who has that condition of

being attracted to the same sex is a valid prayer, even if they lead the prayer. But the idea of acting on it, and also just purely rectal [inter]course for male and female is also prohibited, it's simply seen as something that harms people, and so that physical act is prohibited. And I don't think Muslims can change that in any way, because it is 'ma'loom min ad deen darooratan' - it is known by all Muslims and it really can't be waffled or fudged. 02:10:37-2

On the other hand **I think it is important to humanize people and not to dehumanise people and i think that the types of attitudes that a lot of Muslims have are incompatible to the spirit of mercy and 'rahma'**. And the other thing that is important is that **people outside the faith of Islam, according to the opinion that I was taught, are not in any way obliged to follow the details of the Islamic law, so what is prohibited for us is not necessarily prohibited for them if they don't accept Islam as a tradition.** 02:11:06-3

RAMADAN: Yes there are many things here. I think that I agree with all that was said. But I want to be more focused on one of the points that you are making. **Very often, as Muslims, because we are under pressure - there are in many countries today in the West, a list of questions *[71] , which you have to respond to, and you are going to be a good or a bad Muslim depending on your answer,**so there is a list of questions. The point is that even within some of our texts, when we come to something which is not dealing with the text, but an intrinsic discussion from within, that we have to consider some of the texts that are 'qat'i thoboot 'and 'qat'i dalala 'meaning that there is no discussion about the authenticity and about the substance and the meaning. It's that if Muslims - we are not sharp and coming with something which is a definitive response to this, **it is as if we are lesser Muslims.** So let me give you two examples. there is one thing which is quite important, that is we have clear cut texts, and they have to be implemented, But sometimes the context within which you live has to be taken into account to know what you are going to do with this. When for example with Muslims, half of the Muslim organisations in this country stopped to invite me when I called for a moratorium *[72] on the 'hudud'. Because some were saying oh you are questioning the very essence of the text - you are questioning the texts themselves. I never did that. You will never find in anything that I wrote something which is saying that it is not in the Quran or it is not in the prophetic tradition. 02:12:57-6 The death penalty is in the Quran, the corporal punishments are in the Quran and the stoning is in the Prophetic tradition. I never said that it's not in the text. What I am saying is that the conditions to implement these texts are not there. So it's impossible to implement. So the best way is not to pretend, in some petrol-monarchies that we are fulfilling or being faithful to Islam. Because the first intention must be faithfulness. So I think what we are doing in the name of Islam is just unjust. 02:13:23-7

So it's not because it's the liberal democracy that someone says 'oh it's a European, it's a Swiss citizen teaching us Islam.' I respond to this by saying, "No, it's a Muslim, asking you as a Muslim, asking you whether what is being done is Islamic.' 02:13:42-5

And like the Mufti Shaykh Ali Gomaa responded, coming to say, that he was not in agreement with the methodology, with the way I did it, but saying yes, I agree with the substance - that we cannot implement this. And I got many scholars that were agreeing on principles, but not publically. After a discussion in Morocco some said 'We agree with you but we're not going to say it.' 02:14:07-4

But this is a point which is the crisis of authority. Where we are scared about the repercussion of what the Muslims are going to say about us. 02:14:16-7

So my point here is to say, on your discussion, that there are some principles which, in order to be faithful, we have to look at the environment. 02:14:27-7

Now, on some of the principles, such as when it comes to homosexuality, when it comes to some of these issues, where the Muslims are pushed yet to have to accept this. I say no. And this is why it is so important to be able to come with something which is clear as to the principles and open as to humanity and into humanizing. What I say is to respect the people and to disagree with what you are doing. Saying 'I don't like it, it's not permitted in my religion, but I respect who you are.' And this is the way I am, this is the way you should be in society. 02:14:59-8

So the Muslims are so much on the defensive that this attitude is sometimes perceived as 'Oh, you are betraying the very essence of the religion.' And I would say exactly the opposite - it is the very essence of the religion that we are protecting by conveying clarity on the principles and openness in what the relationships are that we have with people. 02:15:21-9

AHMAD: Thank you very much. Can I take a question from the gentleman over here?
02:15:35-3

PART IV

QUESTION 4

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Asalaamu alaikum. Basim Elkarra with the Council on American-Islamic Relations and the Democratic Party. Many communities and mosques in the West are held hostage by a few. These leaders do not give space to other especially the youth. They drive and alienate the youth. Away from the faith. How do we deal with the issue of community leadership. The crisis of community leadership. 02:15:54-7

AHMAD: Can I address that question to Shaykh Hamza?

YUSUF: There's a principle in Islam that the ruler removes difference of opinion. So, for instance, in Ramadan, when do we start? In the West we have problems like in America on which day do we start? They don't have a problem in Egypt because they just announce: 'It's Ramadan tomorrow, everybody fast.' 02:16:21-9

So leadership is a fluid thing. Leadership is about authority and people have different levels of authority. Dr. Ramadan yields a certain amount of authority. I yield a certain amount of authority. But we don't have the type of authority that Hosni Mubarak has in Egypt. And so it becomes **...you can't just dictate to people what to do. You can try to convince them with arguments. And that's really what I believe Islam is about.** The Quran is about convincing people with arguments and dialectic. And also it's a give and take process.

So I think it's important that especially the youth leaders, they have their own authority, they begin to emerge. People like Rami Nashishibi is a good example in the United States. Intissar Rab. I mean there are many examples. Cream tends to rise to the top. Leadership is often something that is organic. Even in a political process it's organic. It can be spoiled cream as well, so it doesn't necessarily yield always good leadership. Leaders tend to display certain qualities that people respond to and I think it's more of an organic process rather than trying to superimpose on people some sort of models 02:17:44-3

RAMADAN: Yes, but I would say something here, which is that I have a problem with this question. Because it's very... you know we are facing these questions very often. Young Muslims are saying 'how can we get new leadership *[73] ?' At the end of the day there are two things that are very important. Once again I am always coming back to this, which is the intention of what do you want to achieve. Is it a power struggle or is it something which is our contribution? and are we going to be more effective in the environment?

And there is something else which is working, which is that when you do the job, when the eldest are just seeing on the ground that you're doing the job, at the end of the day you stop being the victim.

It's exactly the same with the women. You want an emancipation process, you want to be free, you want to be autonomous, you want to do the work - do it. Just go for it. And I think that many, many experiences not only here can tell you - even in Muslim majority countries. When I went to Indonesia and I met these young people in Malaysia, when they were working in computing, they're doing the job. They go; they do it. **Now it doesn't mean that you have to go**

to be against the leadership. It's just to be a complementary voice, but do the job. Also men, young people, this is the way this has to be done.

And then your knowledge 02:19:07-1 of your environment. Your knowledge of the environment should be brought to the fore as something which is effective in the way. 01:19:15-6 So respect: this is coming from the tradition. This is something that is important But critical thinking and creativity... **We lack creativity in our methodologies.** We lack creativity in the way we come with... you know to reform within Islam is sometimes the means that you are using to reach the people. So these are things that are necessary and I would say that our community are too much passive 02:19:41-7

YUSUF: Just to - I need to bounce off of that a little bit because part of the problem is that - Toynbee argues that **the fundamental crisis in civilization is when they confront *[74] challenges but they don't have creative responses** and he argues that creative responses are indeed what saves a civilization

Part of the problem is [that] some of the best and brightest minds that we have no longer go into Islamic studies, they go into medicine. We have incredibly creative responses in medicine to the challenges of medicine. We have incredibly creative responses to engineering. I mean they're always coming up with new ways to build higher buildings. My God I was just in Dubai and that thing - it's almost to Pleiades! But the problem is that when you direct so much of your intellectual energies into these areas and fields of expertise and you don't direct those energies into some of the most difficult questions that face us - which are philosophical, which are ethical.

We need real ethicists. We need people who are trained in ethical philosophy. Not just a kind of modern book on ethics. I mean if you read classical ethical treatises they are philosophical treatises that teach people how to reason ethically, not simply having a hadith that teaches you some ethical truism but to reason ethically...because **if we had people reasoning ethically we would never have come up with fatwas that supported suicide bombing, ever.** 02:21:10-6

[APPLAUSE] 02:21:11-3

AHMED: Thank you very much. We're really coming very close to the end of our time. So what I'm going to do is take two more questions from the floor and one pre-submitted question. I'm going to put them together and hope the speakers can answer them in bullet fire form. 02:21:36-9

Can I have one here? What you have to do you just walk around and come to this mic here. Whilst you're coming can we have the question from.. one here and one here. So can we start with this one here? 02:21:53-8

QUESTION 5

IMAM AHMAD SA'AD, NORTH LONDON CENTRAL MOSQUE: My question is actually both for Dr. Ramadan and Shaykh Hamza. Shaykh Hamza first: Don't you think there is a need as well for some kind of an institutional reform for our religious schools? Like where I come from, for example, in Azhar, we had a very interesting experience towards the end of the 18th century in 1970 or 1997 or around that time when the French came to Egypt one of the shuyukh, Shayk-ul-Islam Hassan Al-Attar , he actually realized out of all the shayukh of Azhar that there is a need for him to explore the French - these invaders who actually came to the country - and try to teach them the Arabic and get some engineering knowledge and stuff like that. And that has actually paved the road for people like Rifa'a al-Tahtawi to come to Paris and other shayukh to come to Europe and explore. So don't you think that there is a need actually to reform our institutions of Islamic learning within the Muslim world as well? and as our Shaykh Ali Goma'a speaks about the importance of regenerating sciences as our predecessors have done that.

QUESTION 6

JOURNALIST, GUARDIAN NEWSPAPER: I just wanted to ask on behalf of all of the government officials here and I should point out at this stage that I'm from the Guardian. But is it a given that reform or renovation - whatever terms you want to use - that will make it less likely that Muslims will be involved in violence against the interests of the West? What the West perceives to be of interest - is it a guarantee? Or basically my question is about unintended consequences 02:23:50-2

QUESTION 7

AHMED: OK and we had one pre-submitted question from IMAM SARWAR from IQRA TV - "Some Muslims would hold that Islam can sit perfectly comfortably within a secular society and the religion does not oblige us to work to change the political status quo. In this light - can it be argued that the Muslim can be a neo-conservative and a good Muslim at the same time?"

YUSUF: *[75] Just to answer the question about renewal of the colleges - you know I studied in a traditional methodology. A lot of it was rote memorization and there is definitely, a fundamental need for memorization in the Islamic tradition - undeniably - but on the other hand - there has to be other components, particularly a critical reading of text. And that has to be incorporated into the students' understanding early on

You know I would definitely argue - Shaykh Abdullah Bin Bayyah recently - we were at Al-Azhar - and he gave a talk and argued that four subjects need to be renewed *[76] – ‘tajdeed’. And he said that the first one was ‘usul ul-fiqh’ which I think in many ways he's done, I mean he wrote this extraordinary books “Sena’atal Fatwa” which is the craft of giving a ‘fatwa’ - showing the methodology. And the second one was ‘furoo ul-fiqh’ which is the branches of jurisprudence. And the third was the need for renewal of tasawwuf as the spiritual component or the inward reality of the Sharia.

And I don't think historically there was ever...**there was always an understanding of Sharia and Tariqa** - that there's an inward road to God and there's an outward road and they have to be traversed at the same time by the same individual. And the final one 02:25:34-8 is the aqidah itself. **Many of the ‘aqidah’ the creedal issues that are discussed in madrahsas are absolutely absurd in the light of modern science and even physics.** I mean now there are knowledge of modern physics that solves a lot of the early problems that they were discussing. And they were trying to do it. So there needs to be a renewal. On the other hand, it's a work that needs - what Shaykh Abdullah bin Bayyah says - needs a vast knowledge, because it can't be done by pygmies. **It really has to be done by people that are really capable and highly qualified to do that.**

And *[77] then in terms of the Guardian question about reform and violence...I mean, I would argue - Zbigniew Brzezinski who's quite brilliant – Polish-American - I heard him once in a lecture talk about the response to the Black Nationalist violent movements in the United States of America and he said there was a multi-dimensional approach to that problem. One of them was curtailing the violence which was a criminal justice problem. But he said the other one was addressing the real issues that were creating the violence. And as long as we don't address a lot of these issues... And I'll just give you one example – I've read in so many articles ...you know Mortimer Zuckerman or whoever arguing that 'Palestine isn't really an issue blah blah blah it's just an excuse' - Rubbish.

[APPLAUSE]

YUSUF: I was just in Morocco which is at the edge of the Arab world - it's the furthest Western Arab country - in Fez, in one of the most traditional cities *[78] in the Muslim world. The khateeb, who was well into his seventies, he ended his khutbah by praying for Quds, by liberating Quds, by asking God to help the Palestinian people in their oppressed conditions. This is happening all across the Muslim world every Friday. Until people really, seriously address this issue - **and the British of all people should be addressing this issue because a lot of the problem stems from early British problems in that area** [APPLAUSE]. My country inherited the problems [AUDIENCE LAUGHTER] 02:28:09-1

AHMED: and thirdly to Shaykh Hamza - can a Muslim be a neo-conservative and a good Muslim at the same time? 02:28:14-3

YUSUF: I you know - **a neo-con is like** - Con is where we end it in America. You know. And then you could say "por que neo." **Why not neo-fascism? Why not just call a spade a spade.** So **I think it's impossible for somebody to be true to any real humanity in their hearts to follow a completely patently disingenuous political discourse.** Really, disingenuous. They can still be a Muslim though [LAUGHTER] . I don't excommunicate. [LAUGHTER] 02:29:06-8

RAMADAN: Yes, *[79] just to go for - I think that once again I think it's a serious discussion about Al-Azhar, like what you said. Because I think that when I went there and I had the chance to go to Azhar and follow the tradition and to go with one to one courses - Shaykh Ali Goma'a and others who were teachers and professors there and ulemma at Al-Azhar - I decided to go for this on a one to one courses with all the scholars. Because I think that there is something that should be come which is still the tradition and the pillars. This is very important. now, once again the methodology - when it comes to the way we are teaching by heart when you repeat. You know, I was within 'usul ul-fiqh' for example and we had to repeat all this 'qawa'id' [principles]. And you get the knowledge when you know it by heart you are not sure to understand the substance and the critical discussion on this. I think that there is a problem of methodology there is a problem of substance.

There is a problem of the critical mind - which was to learn to ask questions - which is the very tradition of Islah, to ask questions. To question the scholars. I agree that we have a problem with authority. But the problem that we also have now with authority is just this blind authority. When we have a Shaykh - it's just don't ask the question, just follow. I'm sorry this is not...and this is why when this one to one course which I had every morning with Shaykh Ali Goma'a...it was a discussion, it was taking and giving. And I think that this is what we need to come to.

Once again what Mohammad Abdou said when he was coming back to Al-Azhar was something of this kind when he said we need other disciplines, but he was also talking about the way things are taught. And I think that this is **what we need: now, in the West, in Muslim majority countries. We need to do this in Muslim majority countries. But we need now to institutionalize our presence with institutions in the West doing the job.** So, to have this credential now, by having scholars coming from there and working here. Because in our environment we need this. It's impossible to be a scholar, a Muslim scholar, knowing the state of affairs in our countries in the West if we don't get this critical thinking, understanding. And it's vast. And this is why it's not one who can do that. It's not two. It's something which has

to be a collective. **We need to make it clear for the Muslim community: don't only put money in mosques but put money in institutions. And put money in things that are how we're going to teach. This is something which is essential** [APPLAUSE]. 02:31:53-1

Let *[80] me tell you something here which is - you know - you spoke about Palestine. You know I was in the task force in this country. And I was also when for example banned from the United States of America 80% of the question that I got from the American Embassy in Switzerland were about my position on Iraq and my position on the unilateral support of the United States towards Israel. It has nothing to do with the money I gave. It has to do really with political position. So there is only one way forward. If we accept critical discussion in politics - being able to say [that] there is a lack of consistency in the West with our values - this is the only way for us to be heard by Muslims when we say you can't kill innocent people. This is not Islamic. What I said straight after July the 7th is ANTI-Islamic. When I was in the states in New York just after what happened on September the 11th it's not only non-Islamic it's anti-Islamic. We cannot support this 02:33:01-3

The point is for us is to know where we are, with whom we are talking. **So when now we have some Muslims, some Muslims, being able to work with the government *[81] and supporting the inconsistency of the government when they are saying 'condemn violence and don't speak about other things.'** No, I'm sorry. **That is not going to work. There is no way for us to go towards peace if we are not serious about consistency in politics. Meaning the blood of an Iraqi man is the same as the blood of an American man.** [APPLAUSE] 02:33:37-4

This is the starting point of our discussion. It's the starting point of the discussion. I'm sorry to say that some in our government - just I'm finishing on these two points - but this point really - I think that it's very serious. It's very serious. Because **you're not going to solve the problem if every time you come with this discourse, our loyalty to the country is challenged and questioned. It's questioned. It's *[82] said, 'Oh you're not a real British' , 'You're not a real American.'** I think it's wrong. **This is where we are. The dignity of Britain - the dignity of the United States of America - when we are able to say this as Muslims. So this is our contribution.**

I would say that if you deal with governments, if you deal with the Labour party in this country, just to say: 'I'm sorry, what you're doing is wrong.' **So you had the prime minister of this country saying there is no connection between what happened in the streets of London and what we are doing in Iraq. So how can you start a discussion when there is such a state of denial that it's wrong what was done in the state of London but please say that's wrong what you're doing in Iraq and what you are forgetting in Palestine.** But now, only by the

way - I'm of this opinion: I really want us as citizens not only to speak about Palestine not only to speak about Iraq and Afghanistan but also to speak about Africa, but also *[83] to speak about the fact that people are being killed in our name. In even what happened in Haiti, for example, it's just before the natural catastrophe. The way we are dealing with the government and corrupt people. There I think that this is where we have to be involved. And this is for me a shift in understanding. But I want the government and our fellow citizens to understand what we are talking about what we are doing talking about this.

And then one thing which *[84] is important. I completely agree - a neo-con and being a Muslim is problematic in my mind - I don't get it. But there is something which is going to be very difficult for all of us. In our involvement in the West - and this happened in Muslim majority countries in a way which was problematic, because when you were following Islamist trends, this is where you were a good Muslim and it's as if all the others were bad Muslims - ... We have to be very cautious here in this political discussion because today we have Muslims who are not going as extreme as neo con or far party or populist. But we will have people in the **Labour parties - we will have people in the Lib Dem and in the conservative. We have Muslims *[85] as citizens now. They are everywhere. And we need to be able to get to that level of political understanding of citizens that we may have the same faith we don't share the same opinions.**

So there is something here which is very important in our way of dealing. **We have to deal with this political diversity as something which is a potential richness and not a liability undermining our community of faith. It's not easy; it's really not easy.** Because this judgmental attitude that we can have on the name of our religion because we come from something which is a very specific understanding of Islam - could be very problematic in the political field. In our life in the west this is the challenge also of diversity that we have to deal with 02:37:03-2 [APPLAUSE]

AHMED: Thank you. Our stewards have negotiated a little more time with the theatre so we do have time for maybe one ... let's start with one [AUDIENCE LAUGHTER] 02:37:24-8

QUESTION 8

STEWARD: This is a very direct submitted question but no less pertinent. Do both speakers believe that the relationships fostered under the new Labour to counter extremist think tanks such as Quilliam have been productive or counterproductive and is it something that the coalition government should put efforts in pursuing? 02:37:43-0

AHMED: Okay, let's start with Professor Ramadan. 02:37:48-9

YUSUF: I'm from America... [AUDIENCE LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE] 02:37:58-6

RAMADAN: Look. My position on this, it's not a black and white. Because today with Quilliam I am differentiating between people and the objective. There are some people I don't want to talk with them because I have no trust. That's over. I saw, I heard, thank you. Some others that I think that are trying their best in between, so I would say I'm not against the fact that we are in touch with the government. It depends on your intention and what you are producing and delivering on the ground. Today, for me, **some of the things that are done by, for example, the Quilliam Foundation are completely counterproductive; completely counterproductive.**

[AUDIENCE APPLAUSE] 02:38:54-5

RAMADAN: No *[86] , that's not right. It's something which - this is exactly the opposite of what I wanted. I don't want this kind of just throwing away something which is a project. I think that some things are counterproductive. And I think there are other things, other questions that are very, very important. I think that some of the questions which are coming from the Quilliam Foundation and others are very important to listen to. So I'm against this attitude that sometimes we have – ‘Oh, it's coming from Quilliam, so throw it away.’ no. Listen, listen. So, for example, let me tell you something which is not only coming from within the Muslim community but we have for example you know Brigitte Bardot, she's from the far right - very bad - she doesn't like the Muslims. She's clearly a racist. She's a racist. And say they are staring with the sheep and then they will end with us, by slaughtering us. This is what she's saying

But there is something which is very important for me. I was not going to react emotionally. I was going to tell her: ‘look, look you are racist. The way you are dealing with Arabs and Muslims I will never accept that.’ But at the same time she is saying something which is important. Which is: ‘look, Muslims, the way you are dealing with the animals when it comes to Eid-al-Adha is just not respectful - you are disrespectful’ - and I listen to this and I say in all of these you are wrong and in this you are right. I will listen to this and forget about all that. **And I think it's exactly the same with the Quilliam Foundation. I'm ready to throw away 90% because I think it's counterproductive and the 10% - welcome to the discussion.** 02:40:39-2

AHMED: Thank you very much.

[AUDIENCE APPLAUSE] 02:40:42-3

AHMED: Shaykh Hamza 02:40:45-6

YUSUF: On that question... [AUDIENCE LAUGHTER]. I agree about the sheep. They should definitely be treated with more... [AUDIENCE LAUGHTER, SCATTERED APPLAUSE] Really. And I saw Brigitte Bardot when I was a kid...what happened? [LAUGHTER] 02:41:07-3

AHMED: Okay. We have one final question. Please, a quick question and a quick answer. Can I take it from the lady here please? Thank you. 02:41:21-2

QUESTION 9

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Asalaamu Alaikum. It's probably not a very sophisticated question; it's more of a practical, real question. I've been just listening trying to take everything in that you've been saying, but at the same time, as someone who is very active and has been very active in both Ireland and here and at the grassroots level working with Muslim women's groups and non-Muslim - and the youth..My own experience -if that's anything to go by on activism has left me quite soured and disappointed actually. And how do you reconcile...I suppose that's the question: how do you reconcile the prophetic injunction to plant saplings in the middle of the Hour with the reality that actually for a lot of Muslims it's very hard? The reality of raising children here it's very hard. You know, some people can tell us go back to your own countries. Well, I don't belong anywhere, or I belong as much here as I belong anywhere. And I find it hard - I find that engagement genuinely hard. And I think that reflects the reality of quite a lot of people - younger and older - trying to raise children, trying to communicate with children, values....when everything else around you says - you're an outsider [voice breaks]- it's very difficult 02:42:49-3

[APPLAUSE] 02:42:50-7

YUSUF: The Prophet sallallahu alayhi wa sallam said that Islam - it began as an alien thing and it will return to being an alien things, so blessed are the alienated ones. The world's an alienating place. **We're all going to be dead in this room within at least the maximum 100 years and there will be a whole new group of people debating and discussing** . Maybe, maybe not. But you know it is very difficult.

I was on an airport going to Kuwait and I sat next to Muahammad al- Awadi who's a famous presenter there - a very brilliant Kuwaiti guy - and the stewardess came - and she had Ayesha on her name tag. I asked her where she was from, she said Senegal. And then Muhammad al-Awadi said - she didn't have a hijab on - but he said, "are you able to pray on the plane?" And she said, "yes." And then he said, "Can *[87] I ask you a question." And she said, "yes." And he said, "How do you feel about serving wine on the plane?" She said, 'It's really hard.' [voice breaks] "but I always use my left hand." And...you know, I was so moved by that - that attempt - in such an incredibly difficult circumstance - to be as true as she could to what she believed was right.

Because Muslims do deal with foul things with their left hand and um... there are a lot of people struggling out there. So God bless you. 02:44:35-8

[AUDIENCE APPLAUSE] 02:44:46-1

RAMADAN: There is no way to deny the fact that educating our kids... and you know **today - to be a couple is a jihad. To be a father and a mother is a jihad. And to be a kid to be a boy *[88] or a girl is in itself a jihad.** The starting point is exactly this one - is just to acknowledge the fact that it's very difficult. But now there are also conditions. And I would say that in the West, it's very difficult today to be a father and a mother. But there are conditions and we have to come back to this. When I wrote the book on "The Prophet," peace be upon him, the point for me was really to look at the way he was and to extract from his behaviour principles.

There is something which is very problematic. When you are scared from the environment, you know when you are full of confidence. It's different than when you are scared. When you are scared from the environment you come with rules because you think that rules are protecting you. But when you come with a state of confidence you know that it's going to be difficult. But you say "natawakkalu 'ala Allah" [meaning] we rely on God and we go for it.

There is something which are conditions*[89] and the first one is look at the way the Prophet, peace be upon him, was with his wife and with his kids. The second thing which is important is communication and there is no way today in our schools - or supplementary schools are sometimes Islamic schools - we come with the rules and we forget the fact that we need communication - we need to let the people express. So I would say that in our family there is something which is quite important which is communication - which is to listen. It is to be able to look and have this - the signs which are coming - and I think this is what is missing today - lack of communication.

The third things which is important in the way that we deal with our kids here is critical thinking. It's also to let them ask questions - and sometimes make mistakes and try to deal with the environment.

And the fourth thing which is for me important is not to cut them from the surrounding society - is to equip them with critical thinking and allow them to make some choice. It is not going to be easy. No one said that. Critical thinking and then communicating and then trust. Trust. You know I always say something which is a part of my personal experience when my own father. Once when I asked him something he gave it to me. He gave me money and said: 'Don't do something which is displeasing God.' And he was sending me a message which I'm not able

myself to do with my own kids. Which is trusting the relationships with your conscious. 02:48:00-2

So*[90] I think once again we need to do this - within our family. We need institutions. We need places where we can talk about this. And sometimes there is nothing wrong with having people helping us or mediators or even psychologists. Sometimes when it comes to... we need this. And these Muslims would say, 'You know, the only answer is go to pray.' That's fine. I know that I have to pray, but you are not solving the problem. So I would say that once again it's a question of - it's difficult - but we have the responsibility to find the right means where we are to solve the challenges. When we are living in the West it is a community responsibility to try to find these ways. And sometimes you know you are dealing with the exact same answers that I have, which is that we are very far from understanding the problems and coming with the rights answers. So I would say that, yes. But once again, there is something which is today helping us. When you're looking at the last 30 years, the Muslims today are doing much better than before. So we have to carry on and to try to find the right institutions and the right way to deal with the young girls and the younger ones.

And please don't only come with halal and haram, [the] 'don't do this, don't do that.' While we still have to come with something that has to do with authority...and I would say something which is 'you are women and you talk about this.' **And one of the most important problems that we have today in our families has nothing to do with women. It has to do with men; it has to do with fathers.**02:49:38-7

[APPLAUSE] 02:49:40-0

No, I'm not saying this to please anyone. I'm just saying that we are not serious about this challenge. We are not. There is something which is very deep here, which is the father - the role and this relationship. And I would say that this is something that we all have to keep in mind. 02:49:58-8

[APPLAUSE] 02:50:03-0

PARTING REMARKS

AHMED: Thank you very much. We really have come to the end of our time today. So can i just ask our media representative Myriam to sum up - to give some instructions for the proceedings for the night - the closing. And once again thank you very much Shaykh Hamza Yusuf and Professor Tariq Ramadan. 02:50:23-6

[APPLAUSE] 02:50:31-9

CERRAH: Wow, what an insightful journey we've been on tonight. We've laughed; we've cried. We've done perhaps a lot of the in between. And I think that the breadth of emotions that we've possibly been through tonight is somewhat testimony to the vast array of issues that we're facing as Muslims.

I'm just going to ask of you five minutes so that we can thank everyone for their involvement in tonight's event as you can imagine it wasn't a one man show. We'd obviously like to thank our speakers Shaykh Hamza and Professor Tariq Ramadan for being with us here tonight.

[APPLAUSE]

We'd like to thank you the audience because of course you're a major component of the show and you've made it what it is. The ISoc team – in particular, Imad Ahmed, for heading up this gargantuan operation and taking it from a seed to the fantastic event we've had tonight, Alhumdullilah. Reem Rahman, for being our management whiz, Nawaz Ahmad, Sazan Meran, Kawther Alfasi, Imran Mahmud, Arzoo Ahmed, Amir Shaheen, and so many others for their delightful phone manner and powers of persuasion - not to mention tenacity and resistance to sleep deprivation. Salman Farsi and Ruhul Amin for being technological genii, all of our stewards here tonight. Shaykh Babikir for being an inspiration to us at all times.

And everyone who made this evening possible – thank you. Thank you so much. Asalaamu Alaikum. Peace be upon you

[APPLAUSE] 02:52:05-7

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/Rethinking-Reform#sthash.zIPiyVcO.dpuf>

Transcript for Religion and Foreign Policy Conference Call

Transcript Details

Event Name: Religion and Foreign Policy Conference Call

Transcript Author: Council on Foreign Relations

Description: Council on Foreign Relations

Date Transcribed: 9/11/2007 12:00:00 AM

Original

URL: http://www.cfr.org/publication/14289/religion_and_foreign_policy_conference_call_with_hamza_yusuf.html

IRINA A. FASKIANOS: Welcome to the Council on Foreign Relations Religion and Foreign Policy Conference Call Series. Our goal, as many of you know, is to provide a non-partisan forum for discussion on issues at the nexus of religion and foreign policy. We are pleased to kick off our 2007-2008 series today with Shaykh Hamza Yusuf. He is the founder and Chairman of the Board of the Zaytuna Institute and he will lead the discussion on Islamic Education in America. As you all saw from his bio, he has been recognized as one of the West's most influential Islamic scholars and recognized Muslim leaders in both the Western and Arab world. He is the author of several books, numerous essays, op-eds and a host of a widely watched Arab television programs. He was the first American lecturer to teach at the Morocco's prestigious and oldest university and has also translated several classical Arabic traditional texts and poems into modern English. Shaykh Hamza, thank you so much for being with us today.

HAMZA YUSUF: All right, thank you for having me.

IRINA A. FASKIANOS: It's wonderful. I thought we could start by having you give us an overview of the work that you are doing at the Zaytuna Institute-- as people on the call know, Zaytuna is one of the only globally recognized of a handful of Islamic teaching institutions in the United States-- and talk about the role that you've played in providing an Islamic education and the role that you're playing on educating and training in this country, so over to you.

HAMZA YUSUF: Right. First of all, just thank you very much and thanks everybody who joined in. Hope this is a fruitful conversation.

Basically the Zaytuna Institute was founded eleven years ago and it was founded out of a vacuum that I and others perceived in the United States, and that is a real stark absence of traditional seminaries or training institutions that would produce teachers and people that were

capable as serving as Imams in communities. In the United States, one of the things that is, I think, really starkly apparent for anybody that knows the Muslim aims, is that many of our mosques actually have Imams and Friday preachers, the person called (inaudible). People that actually have very little or no training at all, many of them are trained in engineering and other sciences, and obviously have a strong commitment and are autodidacts, but a lot of the religious preaching that goes on, in my own experience, and many, many Muslims, is really not up to the level that one would expect from a religion as globally recognized as Islam.

So the idea was really to create a seminary here in the United States that would produce indigenous Imams and teachers. My own experience as a convert, when I embraced Islam and became quite fervent, I wanted to study the religion and study primary sources. My only option really at the time was to go overseas. And even the overseas conditions were not really, I think, very conducive to somebody who was just new in the religion. So I ended up in the United Arab Emirates. I was at an Islamic institute there and then I was in Saudi Arabia for over a year studying with private scholars, although I was offered a scholarship to Medina University there. And then I went to North and West Africa and spent about ten years abroad, and then came back and I continued studies with teachers from abroad because I think that's the nature of the Islamic teaching.

So coming back here and founding this, I think it's evolved in our own understanding of what's needed. And partly what we recognize is that Imams that are more fluent with the discourse in the West, with the very specific conditions that Muslims find themselves in in the West. My primary teacher right now who is Shaykh Abdullah bin Bayyah, who's a professor of Islamic law in Jeddah, but also recognized globally as really one of the foremost Usuli or constitutional jurisprudence scholars, he's written a book recently called *The Jurisprudence of Minorities* and he has addressed this situation that has really not been addressed by many scholars, and certainly not at the level that he has, of just recognizing that we do have unique conditions.

And so it's been very important for me to really, what I'd like to do right now quickly before we go into the conversation with others, is just to give you just a quick overview. There's a book written by Franz Rosenthal, he's a brilliant historian of Islam. He wrote a book called *Knowledge Triumphant: the Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam*. And one of the things that he says in there-- it's published by Brill and it's really a fascinating book-- but one of the things he says in there is that the Islamic civilization was a civilization probably more than any other historically that really was centered around knowledge, the ideal of knowledge. And so you have many great teaching institutions that emerged in the Muslim land. If you go on any search for the oldest university in the world you'll find it was the Karaouine in Fez, which was established in the seventh century, sorry in the ninth century, 853, and precedes the great teaching universities of Europe by over one-hundred years.

So these great teaching institutions produced extraordinary scholars and you had what the Catholics would call a Magisteria, which in a sense protected the religion, because you had

qualified scholars that were coming out of these institutions like Al-Azhar in Egypt and Mustansiriya in Baghdad, in Iraq; the (inaudible), which was in what's now Central Asia, and also in Baghdad and other places, Bahria in Damascus. You have these great teaching institutions and they produce scholars that had a recognized level of expertise in their various fields. And these became the great preservers and teachers of Islam. In the Colonial period a lot of these institutions were seen as areas of resistance and so there was quite a move to harness them, and you actually, the Usafia in Morocco was closed down and the Karaouine was changed quite radically. The same occurred -- Lord Cromer working with Mohammad Abdul in Egypt instituted some pretty serious changes in Al-Azhar and the Mustansiriya really becomes an Arabic college. It's still being used in Baghdad.

So you really have a crisis in the twentieth century of knowledge in Islam. The, probably the areas where you don't find this as much is Turkey and Iran, where you have the Shia scholarship has maintained the Madrassas largely due to the fact that they have independent funding sources because of what they call (inaudible), a certain tithing that merchants have to pay in Iran. And in Turkey, because the Ottoman system was really quite extraordinary, and so they've maintained quite a high level of scholarship within Turkey, and they tend to be state Imams that preserve the state religion, even though it's a secular state, religion still is very much controlled by the state. The only other place that you'll find that is in Morocco.

Now in the United States, we have obviously an immense immigration that occurs during the 1960s after the 1965, the Immigration Act, and you got a lot of Muslims coming in to these countries from various places, many of them to study engineering and medicine with the hope of going back home and having a kind of technology transfer. Well a lot of these people ended up staying and their children have been born and raised here. And so we find now that there's probably between six and ten million American Muslims today, and yet we don't have any serious teaching institutions, despite the fact that we have over two-thousand mosques in the country. We, there are some, what are called Darul Uloom that are based on the Indian model from Deoband that do provide a certain level of scholarship. But the scholarship tends to be very provincial and limited in its scope, and certainly is unable in many ways to address a lot of the very sophisticated problems that our community is facing as a minority community and a religious community that has many, many similarities to the Jewish tradition. And I think a lot of the things that the Jewish community suffered in this country are now being replicated within the Muslim community. And so you actually find if people know the Jewish model, it's actually a more useful model, as far as I'm concerned, than the RAND model, because if you look at the RAND model and how it classifies Muslims in the West, it tends to use the kind of cold-war Soviet categorization of certain types of ideologists in Marxist traditions, so you kind of box people into what type of Marxist they were. And that's, I don't think a helpful in Islam, because you'll find that when RAND categorizes the Muslims into these certain categories, you actually end up being quite limited. And I think many Muslims will find themselves in more than one of those categories and in the different areas, or subject matter that they talk about.

So in this country, I think you'll find that the majority of Muslims would probably go under what is, would be called in Judaism a conservative branch of Judaism. It's not entirely orthodox, but it's certainly not a reformed type of Judaism, which is far more liberal or reconstructionist, which now you have a reconstructionist Islam that's beginning to emerge in what's been called the Progressive Muslim Movement, which sees Islam more than a religious phenomenon but a civilizational phenomenon, and this really is not a problem being a cultural Muslim as opposed to being a religious Muslim. And there certainly are many, many cultural Muslims.

So in, you know, our attempt really is to try to provide an Islam that is compatible with the West. I think less politicized, which does not mean that I and others that I'm associated with don't have strong political views, but we don't want to see the religion become a vehicle of, a political vehicle for Middle Eastern politics or something like that, which it often has been made into, unfortunately, because of immigrants bringing Middle Eastern baggage and other baggage.

And then finally, just the reason why I feel this is extremely important is because there are many, many problems that will occur, that have already occurred, and will continue to occur as a result of this lack of sound Islamic institutions in the West, in the United States and Canada, and certainly in Europe, that's, but one of the big problems that we have is, I think many people have noticed, and it's September 11th, so we're probably thinking about this today more than other days, but some of the people that have been involved in extremism are coming out of the convert community. Ibrahim (inaudible) is an example of that recently in Germany. Some German converts were arrested because of alleged plots and also now the spokesperson in English for al-Qaeda is actually a convert from, a Jewish American convert, from Southern California. American (inaudible) John Walker Lynn is also another one.

So, one of the dangers with conversion is conversion is an extremely powerful experience, which I can personally attest to. And Gandhi once noted about Mohammed (inaudible), an Englishman who became Muslim, he said he was that rare breed of man who was capable of adopting a new religion without becoming a fanatic. So unfortunately it's quite common for people who have strong conversion experiences to enter with a lot of zeal. And because of that, they're susceptible at that period in their life to whatever ideas they happen to be exposed to at the time, believing them to be the sound ideas or principles of this new adopted religion.

And the other very serious concern is in the prison population, because many of the people that adopt Islam within the prisons are coming from dysfunctional homes and already had criminal tendencies, and if they come into Islam and are exposed to an extreme form of Islam, which is very, very possible, [the German convert to Islam] being a good example of that, then I think it's potentially extremely dangerous. So if we don't have really well trained scholars in the United States that can argue a sound orthodox and moderate Islam that preaches coexistence and also is able to be adaptive to the needs of modern society. I think that if we don't do that, it's going to really be a major problem, I think, for a burgeoning population in the West. So I'll leave it at that.

IRINA A. FASKIANOS: Terrific. That was a wonderful overview. [Operator], let's open it up for questions and comments. And we really would like, encourage, both, so please do not be shy. And over to you [Operator].

OPERATOR: At this time we will open the floor for questions.

QUESTIONER A: Good afternoon to everyone. I think I first should thank you, the organization, and Shaykh Hamza Yusuf, who have started a discussion on this very important and timely subject. I, being a student of psychology and education for almost fifty years of my life, went to teachers college at Columbia University. I have come to realize, and I'm from India, some of the issues that have been raised in the introduction by Shaykh Hamza Yusuf. I think they can be viewed, to begin with, in a more objective fashion and then we can talk about the possible ways in which this subject needs to be discussed to begin with, and see how people will respond to some of the issues that are going to be raised during these discussions.

Islam, as Shaykh Hamza Yusuf pointed out by referring to an author, has advocated knowledge as an extremely important means of empowering human beings and human society from the very beginning. It has never restricted itself only to the revelation. The revelation, in fact, guides Muslims as to how they need to become active seekers in a natural setting. That's one way, clearly, that why in the very beginning stages of Islam, from the time of the prophet (inaudible), we see an explosion of Muslim scholars from all over the known area of the Muslim, you know, community of that time. Unfortunately, as societies go through the process of rising and falling, the Islamic culture and Islamic civilization started to fall. And then people just, you know, for their own understanding, preferred to be successful here and in the hereafter, they probably have to make sure that they observe the five pillars, you know, and they do certain social and other activities in a certain way, and the rest were left to the politicians and other people to determine the society of, you know, later teachers in Islamic history.

And the fact that Islam was a major factor in the struggles for freedom should be recognized very clearly by everyone. Islam was, in fact, the mainspring of many political indigenous movements throughout the Western world and it still inspires people to make sure that their government implements a system of justice and fairness that's consistent with Islamic values. So at every stage since the independent movements in the Muslim world, we see Islam playing a very important role. And even as we see the wars that are taking place, whether it's in the Middle East or in Africa, Islam is a source of inspiration for quite a few people.

So it's very important for the [Council on Foreign Relations] to recognize that it's not going to be in the best interest of the policymakers in this country to label those kinds of agencies from working in the Muslim community (inaudible) as dangerous. In fact, they should understand that there is a very important factor that needs to be recognized as not only consistent, but compatible with the basic values of democracy: equality, freedom, liberty.

Unfortunately our foreign policy has been viewed as supporting rulers and governments that are more determined to suppress freedom and liberty and the struggle for justice and fairness. So at this moment, while we are talking about Islamic education in America, we also have to recognize that the younger generation especially, and from within the older generation, a great number of people do recognize that Islam does have very clear values in terms of fairness, in terms of justice, in terms of liberty, that are very consistent with the democratic values, and they need to be incorporated within the Islamic education model in such a way that the traditional model automatically becomes irrelevant for the Muslim generations that are going to grow within the United States. And I personally feel that the best integrated model of Islamic education will not only become a model that will be emulated by the Muslim societies around the world, it will also present, as a model, for a secular setting like within the United States, in which justice, fairness, equality, liberty, which are the guiding principles of the Western society and also that of Islam, can very well be integrated.

IRINA A. FASKIANOS: Okay, we have many people on the call, if we...

QUESTIONER A: I'll leave it there. I thank you very much for this opportunity.

IRINA A. FASKIANOS: Thank you.

OPERATOR: Okay.

QUESTIONER B: Yes, hi. I'm very pleased to have a chance to hear you talk, Mr. Yusuf. My field is European politics, and as you know, European governments have been very directly involved in trying to address some of the issues that you mention. And I was wondering how you feel government and other voluntary institutions can help address some of the issues you are rising? The problem you identify requires a tremendous amount of institution building, from seminaries to training programs for how to teach Islam in schools from top to bottom. And we have a fifth amendment position in this country that makes it very difficult to do anything somewhat similar to what is being done in Europe. So I was wondering if you could outline some ideas about what could be done.

HAMZA YUSUF: Okay. I think it's a great question. I'm pretty... I'm actually quite familiar with the British situation. I have less familiarity, though some, with what's happening with continental Europe, but you know, I would say in the British model, I think it's very dangerous for the government to be directly involved in funding. And the main reason for that is a lot of the extremism that has arisen in the Muslim world is a direct result of this co-opted Islam that is seen as buttressing up these totalitarian governments. And Muslims generally are extremely wary of government involvement in their religion, and a lot of the voices that are listened to are voices... I'll give you one example. (Inaudible) in Europe, his, his popularity went up considerably because he was not allowed to come into the United States, in Europe. I mean, I can guarantee that there's a direct correlation, because Muslims who are seen somehow as standing up against what other Muslims consider unjust foreign policy or whatever, they have a

credibility amongst the Muslims and in the community. So I think government involvement, the best thing that they can do is just be, you know, helpful in facilitating, just in terms of the legalities of what's needed, and not being road-blocks in the way.

I think there's a lot of, in this country there's an immense amount of just fear of anything associated with Islam. I think the governments need to become more sophisticated in understanding the nuances of the community and the fact that for instance, the Deobandi community is not a threat to, they're very conservative, they're apolitical. They actually emerged out of the Indian rebellion of 1857 and decided that military struggle was no longer an appropriate strategy, and they felt that a knowledge-based struggle was much more important. And so that is their focus.

Now their support of the Taliban in Afghanistan had much more to do with the Deobandi, just the fact that the Taliban was associated with the Deoband community and not so much with its involvement with al-Qaeda, which is a whole other problem. I mean the Taliban's involvement, which is a whole other problem. So, you know, I think there's a, I personally, you know, I've been involved in an advisory capacity in the UK with the British government, but just my, the fact that I've been associated in any way with the British government has had a negative impact on my own credibility within the community in certain sectors, and you know, so that's why I've tended to try to keep, just avoid those types of associations because of the impact it has on the credibility within the community.

IRINA A. FASKIANOS: Terrific, next question.

OPERATOR: Thank you.

QUESTIONER C: Thank you, Shaykh Hamza, for your kind, nice explanation. I have a question about, when you say, when you said in your presentation about why Islam is compatible with the West. Could you elaborate on that, what you mean by that?

HAMZA YUSUF: Well what I would say is that there are a lot of Muslims, active practicing Muslims, that don't fully understand a lot of the principles upon which Western political society certainly, and to a large extent cultural society, is predicated. And so there's a belief, because of the post-colonial trauma that exists within a lot of the Muslim world, and certainly in the minds of a lot of immigrants in these countries, there are many devout Muslims that just simply see the West and anything that it advocates as being antithetical to Islam. I think that's changing, and it's a necessary change. So I do feel it's changing within the community, but it's not changing fast enough and a lot of the young people-- the United Kingdom is a really good example of this-- a lot of the young people are just completely alienated from the political process, from the idea they can even participate.

I mean, there's, and this is where the dangers arise, I think. It's certainly, many of the American Muslims, Canadian Muslims and European Muslims as well, many of them actually have very

little to do with Islamic communities. They're quite assimilated and they're living lives as doctors and engineers and taxi drivers and other things. But for those that are deeply committed to Islam, if they don't, if they're not presented with an Islam that enables them to be fully Western and fully Muslim at the same time... the West, like Islam, is not a monolithic. There's, we have orthodox Jews that live in the heart of Brooklyn that don't read newspapers or watch television and they've been here for over one-hundred years. And they're part of the tapestry of America. But the vast majority of them pose no, you know, threat whatsoever, and probably you know, all of them with the exception of some ultra-orthodox, very extreme groups that advocate hatred toward Arabs and whatever, you find the reverse on the reverse side.

But my point is, is that there are people that can be understanding that this is part of the West, that there are many ways to be Western. That I can be isolationist like the ultra-orthodox community and still be part of the tapestry of this country. I can also be integrationist. I can be fully active in-- swearing an oath of allegiance to the constitution does not negate one's faith. Keith Ellison, who's a congressman, swore an oath of allegiance to the constitution. There are many Muslims that view that as completely unacceptable and as an act of apostasy. And so I think it's important that from within the tradition itself, which we have ample room for presenting diverse opinion and view from within the tradition itself, I think many of these problems can be resolved if they're done with sensitivity towards the community and awareness of many of the devout Muslims' desires to simply live lives that are congruent with their deepest religious beliefs.

QUESTIONER C: Thank you. I thank CFR for the initiation of this full kind of program and I hope they can continue and encourage other organizations also to keep a tab on this. Thank you very much.

IRINA A. FASKIANOS: Wonderful. We do intend to continue. We have a whole fall lineup. So we will send that out. Next question.

OPERATOR: Okay, our next question.

QUESTIONER D: Yes, thank you very much. Thank you very much for this talk. I work with an organization called the American Jewish Committee and we're starting a task force towards Muslim-Jewish relations, and I'd like to put it to you maybe to help me explore ways in which we can, we can improve such relations. Thank you very much.

HAMZA YUSUF: Okay, well thank you for the question. I think personally, the Muslim community has so much to learn from the Jewish community and the Jewish community's experience. Because a lot of the very same issues that are going on within the Jewish community are going on within the Muslim community, and to me it's sad that we're not able to see the incredible similarities between these two expressions of Abrahamic tradition. So, you know, I think the onus is on both sides to reach out, to be more conciliatory. I think there's a lot of anti-Jewish sentiment in the Muslim community that, that much of it is political. I don't think it's as

much historical and I think Bernard Lewis would agree with that. I've read his book about Jews under Islam, and I think he would agree with that too, that in fact he argues that much of the anti-Semitic ideology that's crept into the Muslim world was actually exported from Europe, from the Christians. That doesn't mean that there's not, I think, a lot of problem within our tradition. But I think the Jewish tradition has the same problem with the Talmud, it has the same problem with their own pre-modern sources. There are things that are objectionable in all of the Abrahamic traditions' pre-modern formulations, and how we are able to maintain our tradition while recognizing that there were egregious mistakes made by even some of the greatest of scholars. I mean that is a very sensitive area, I think, for all three of the faiths, probably more specifically for the Jewish and Islamic faiths because of the weight that we put on these classical scholars.

So I would say that we definitely, it's starting to happen, I'm definitely seeing it. I've been trying to be more outspoken about the anti-Jewish sentiment that exists within the community in recent years, because I've recognized it as a major problem within the Muslim community. And I think also the fear that exists within the Jewish community-- much of it I don't think is phobia, it think it's rational fear, because of a lot of the unfortunate rhetoric that's emanated from the Middle East-- but I think a lot of that fear has to be alleviated by the American Muslim community. And I think that we in America have an extraordinary, and really a unique opportunity to try to transgress, to try to transcend these political barriers that we have now. And I think that the central and most important thing at this stage is to leave Palestine out of this because I've just found that it's a completely, it's just an area that I think we need to establish relations. Before we get into any discussions about what's going on overseas we need to really look at what's happening here and how we can improve the situation between our communities here.

IRINA A. FASKIANOS: Thank you, next question, comment.

OPERATOR: Thank you. Your next question.

QUESTIONER E: Hello. Hello.

IRINA A. FASKIANOS: Yes, you're on.

QUESTIONER E: Okay, thanks. I'm actually, I wanted to thank you for your comments and also attest that you, Shaykh Hamza, has actually spoken out against any kind of anti-, you know, the anti-Jewish sentiment. I heard you speak two years ago at (inaudible) and clearly you did that. My question is; I'm actually an attorney. I was in New York and now I'm in public policy school at the Kennedy school, and I wanted to push you a little bit about nomenclature. You spoke on sometimes about, let's say moderates or other ones, and I'm not, I wanted to get some clarification, because I'm not comfortable within the formality on-- sometimes the words are used in terms of labeling. I don't think they're saying that this, but I wanted to get more clarification, how can we be a part of the process of helping to establish good public policy but at

the same time, I myself am not comfortable with being defined as a moderate or a progressive Muslim. So if you can elaborate on that I would appreciate it.

HAMZA YUSUF: Well, yeah, it's a great question. The topic of nomenclature is an incredibly important one. There's actually a scholar from Morocco that, he has an argument that much of the problem in the world is what he calls (inaudible), which is the crisis of technical terminology. You know, the words we use are so poorly defined in what we mean by them and this is obviously, you know, in the pre-modern society, in the pre-modern society the basis of any debate or discussion was a definition of terms. A (inaudible) was a common term that was used in the medieval period. When somebody used a term, the interlocutor would say, you know, define the term so we know what you're talking about. And so I totally agree with you, it's a major problem. I certainly don't have an answer to the problem. Moderation is something that is based on a definition of extremes. And extremes, if you look in the United Kingdom for instance, you have a spectrum from the *Guardian* to the *Daily Telegraph*, which is certainly a broader political spectrum than we would have. In this country, much of what shows up in the *Guardian* would be considered extreme left, whereas in England it's not considered extreme left, it's considered mainstream left. So I think whoever defines these, and this is Foucault's labeling theory, you know that people in power tend to have the power of definition. So I would agree with you. I find problems with all these terms and, you know, I just, we have to do our best and try to at least define them from within our own usage.

IRINA A. FASKIANOS: Great, next question, comment.

OPERATOR: Your next question.

QUESTIONER F: Hi. I have a very short question and then another question, my main question. The short one is, what is the RAND classification system of U.S. Muslims? I'm not familiar with that. And the longer question is, you mentioned the specific conditions and needs of U.S. Muslims. And you also mentioned trying to do without the baggage of immigrant Muslims from the Middle East. I'm looking for, that it shouldn't, that Middle East immigrants sometimes bring baggage that perhaps should not be part of the discourse here in the U.S., and I guess my question is, how does one really separate that out, since immigrants are so much part of the American experience, and living in Southern California, certainly the Muslim American experience? Not exclusively immigrant by any means, but quite large immigrant communities, many, not all, from the Middle East, as well as South Asia, Africa and other places. But how is this sort of talking about how does one be a good Muslim and say that one be both Eastern and Western? Is that possible, is that part of the specific conditions in the U.S., or are you saying that this is really about defining how to be both Western and Muslim together? Thank you.

HAMZA YUSUF: Okay. Well in terms of the first one, RAND, has a, you know, I think they have six or seven categories. You can look it up on their website. You know, they have, you know, fundamentalist, extremist, they have moderate, but they have boxes to show you their

views in different, like women. So they'll say, you know, that the fundamentalist, extremist, you know, believe that women should have their head covered and this, that. Well, I mean, that's, there are many Muslims that believe that that wouldn't fall into that category. So I think...

QUESTIONER F: Right.

HAMZA YUSUF: Categories as you know are always problematic. They work really well in physical nomenclature when you're using taxonomy or something like that, you know. A horse, you can use a category to define horses, even though a thoroughbred is different from, you know, a Tennessee walker or something like that. But when you get into humans and psychological categories, categories based on belief, it becomes a lot more complex. So I just feel those categories are often too simplistic, and they will often do more harm than good, because people end up being pigeonholed or stereotyped in categories that don't suit them.

In terms of the second question, I think we tend to forget that over 30 percent of the Muslims in America are actually indigenous. African-American, increasingly Hispanic-American, Caucasian-American, so we already have 30 percent. But the indigenization of Islam has yet to occur. It's occurred to a certain degree within the African-American community, but within that community you will find expressions of Islam that are purely Middle Eastern. So you'll find in an inner city in New York, an African-American woman dressed from head to toe in a black abaya with gloves and a veil, believing that this is Islam. Whereas if you go to African, the African continent, you won't find any African women dressed like that, from Senegal, or Mauritania, where I lived, or anywhere, even Sudan and places like that. You'll find very different expressions.

So the process of an indigenization of Islam in America is going to take time. And what I mean by that indigenization is that, where a Western, a person born here, whether an immigrant child who is born and raised here, that they do not feel that their religion is an imported religion. It's an alien religion. It has to do with Pakistan. Or, and when I became Muslim for instance, there were certain cultural choices in front of me. You could become a Pakistani Muslim. And I know American converts who became so Pakistani they actually adopted a Pakistanian accent when they spoke English because of the time they spent amongst South Asian Muslims. And the same is true with people that adopt certain Arab cultures. I, for a period of my life, adopted a North African expression of Islam, and it still influences my Islam to this day. But I'm increasingly becoming aware of the need for people to feel comfortable, what my friend Dr. Winter from Cambridge University says is that Muslims need to be able to make the jump from the West to Islam without losing their clothes in the process. And I think that really expresses that idea of, that you don't have to adopt a foreign culture. That you can be Muslim, you can watch the Super Bowl, you can partake in Thanksgiving and certain cultural expressions without feeling that you're doing something wrong, which right now there are many, many Muslims that still believe that, that there is a total incompatibility. And so we have an isolationist culture.

QUESTIONER F: Thank you.

IRINA A. FASKIANOS: Shaykh Hamza, thank you so much. I think we've reached the end of our time, and indeed have gone over, but this has been a terrific forty-five minutes.

HAMZA YUSUF: Okay.

IRINA A. FASKIANOS: I think everybody would agree. We appreciate your insights. If you want to learn more about Zaytuna, the website is zaytuna.org, very easy to remember. So all of you, thank you for participating in today's call. Our initiative, the Religion and Foreign Policy Initiative, seeks to connect religious and congregational leaders, scholars, and thinkers from across the country in cross-denominational conversations such as these to deepen the understanding of religion on U.S. foreign policy. We would greatly appreciate your feedback and topics that you might like to discuss in future calls, so please send us your ideas to outreach@cfr.org. Our schedule for the fall lineup of calls is now set. You all should receive the agenda. Our next one will be on October 17, with Walter Russell Mead on his book, and he will be discussing religion and the open society. So I hope you join us for that. So thank you all and again thank you Shaykh Hamza for your, your insights today.

HAMZA YUSUF: Okay, Irina, thank you.

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/Religion-and-Foreign-Policy-Conference-Call#sthash.LsDAVSTC.dpuf>

Transcript for Muslims Living in Non-Muslim Lands

Transcript Details

Event Name: Muslims Living in Non-Muslim Lands

Transcript Author:

Description:

Date Transcribed: 7/31/1999 12:00:00 AM

Original URL: <http://www.themodernreligion.com/world/muslims-living.html>

Transcript Text

Muslims Living in Non-Muslim Lands

By Shaykh Abdullah bin Bayyah, Zaytuna Institute

Shaykh Abdullah bin Bayyah visited the Bay Area in the last week of July 1999. He offered a week long course on Usool al-Fiqh in Fremont, California. He then gave a talk on July 31, 1999 at the Santa Clara Convention Center in Santa Clara, California. An edited transcription of that talk appears below. As Shakyh Abdullah spoke, Shaykh Hamza Yusuf translated. At times, Shaykh Hamza added some of his own comments and explanations. These appear in brackets in the text.

Shaykh Hamza Yusuf's Introduction of the Shaykh

Shaykh Abdallah bin Bayyah, hafidhu Allah, is an extremely well-known and well-respected scholar amongst scholars. In fact, he is a scholars' scholar since many of his students are actually considered scholars now in the Muslim world. His students study extremely difficult texts with him that even very well qualified scholars are not capable of understanding with any facility.

Shaykh Abdallah bin Bayyah grew up in one of the eastern provinces in West Africa in Mauritania. From a very young age, he showed extreme gifts intellectually and a profound ability to absorb a lot of information and a lot of the text. During his studies, he memorized an extraordinary number of texts. Then, at a very early age, he was appointed with a group of people to study legal judgements in Tunis and went there for a period of time. When he returned to Mauritania, he became a minister of education and later, a minister of justice. He was also one of the vice-presidents of the first president of Mauritania. However, due to the conditions in Mauritania and the military change of governments that took place, he began to teach, and he

ended up going to Saudi Arabia and becoming a distinguished professor at The University of Usool al-Fiqh.

The shaykh is presently involved in several organizations in the Muslim world, such as the organization which is known as Al Majma' al-Fiqhi, which is comprised of a body of scholars that come together from all over the Muslim world and from all the different madhhabs and different viewpoints; they analyze and study a lot of the modern issues to come up with Islamic solutions to the issues confronting modern Muslims in the modern world.

Shaykh Abdallah is also involved in writing. He has written several books and has delivered lectures all over the world. This is the first time that he has come to America, so I think we are very fortunate that he has come a long way for us. His books are really interesting, and he has expertise in a lot of areas that have been ignored. One of the areas of expertise that he has is in what is know as fiqh al-aqaliyaat which is the fiqh or juristic rulings related to minority Muslims. Because the Muslims tended to prefer hijra to countries where Muslims were the majority, there are not a lot of scholars that work in the area of dealing with how Muslims in minority areas should actually live their lives and how they should behave when confronted with issues that often are in contradistinction to their deen. So, we asked him if he would talk about this subject tonight, and I'm hoping that we will gain a lot of benefit, and I'm certain we will in sha' Allah. The shaykh is going to speak in Arabic-he is very fluent in French, but he is not fluent in English yet. So, we are going to go section by section, and as he speaks, I'm going to translate in sha' Allah for the people who do not know Arabic.

The Shaykh's Insights on the Muslims' Condition and Responsibilities in America

[Bismillah irahman irahem. The shaykh began his talk by praising Allah subhaana wa ta'aala and sending prayers on the Messenger of Allah, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam.] I wanted to speak tonight about your conditions, your circumstances here. You are a group that is small in number and yet strong in faith, a group that has diverse ideas and understandings and whose individuals come from many different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, a group that is few amongst a dominant group that is many. The dominant group is strong in many areas; in fact, they are controlling many areas of the world. I would like to speak tonight about what the priorities of such a group would be: What are the obligations of such a group? What are the responsibilities of such a group? I would like to present some ideas to you, and I hopes that Allah subhaana wa ta'aala helps me to present some ideas that relate to a methodology, to approaches, and to things that will be beneficial to this group if they implement them.

I want to speak about the responsibilities that you carry here. In contrast to Muslims living in the dominant Muslim world at large, you are, in many ways, strangers in a strange land. The Messenger of Allah, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, said, "Tuba lil guraba." In other words, the

conditions of the stranger are blessed conditions, and it also means, "lahum al-jannah: they have paradise" for bearing the burden of alienation. An Arab proverb is, "ya ghareeb kun adeeba: oh stranger in a strange land, be a man of courtesy and cultivation." There is also a hadith, "Islam began alienated and will return as it began, alienated. So, blessed are the alienated ones." This alienation should not mean that you distance yourselves from the rest of the people. That is not the meaning of this state of estrangement. It does not mean you should not work with others or that you should avoid the dominant society and distance yourselves completely from it even though your state is one of estrangement.

Since we know that Islam has legal injunctions and that Muslims have a code of law, a question that occurs immediately to us in looking at these conditions here is whether or not there are rules in our deen that apply to one land and do not apply to another land. As we know, the Messenger of Allah, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, said that Allah subhaana wa ta'aala has made incumbent upon you to fulfill certain obligations, and Allah has also set boundaries for you, so do not transgress those boundaries. As we know, these rules in Islam relate to every Muslim. In terms of human beings, every one is equal in relation to these rules. You cannot say that one Muslim does not have to pray and another one does. All Muslims who are responsible adults have to pray. So, these rules of prayer and fasting, what are known as the arkan al-Islam- the pillars of Islam, the foundations of Islam-are things that are binding upon all Muslims, no matter where they are or what place they are in.

In addition, there is another type of set of rules in Islam that is known as al-ahkam as-sultania, and these are rules related to governmental authority, to the state. These rules involve certain things, such as the penal code of the Muslims. There is a code related to criminal law: if you do this, then this is the punishment. The implementation of those laws is related to the ahkam as-sultania or the rules related to the legitimate authority of the state. The ahkam as-sultania include the rules related to jihaad-in other words, martial activity in which men fight in war and battles. They also include the rules related to zakaah collecting: the gathering of wealth that Allah has obliged people to pay. In addition, they relate to the establishment of imams, not only the greatest imam, who would be the khalifa, but also the aaimma who will be in the masaajid and the qadaat who are the people who give the khutba on the jumu'a. All these types of things are traditionally related to the authority of the legitimate governing body of the Muslims. Muslims need judges; they need courts; they need police-all of these things relate to these ahkam. These types of rules which are known as the ahkam as-sultania are not the concern of those people who are living in a land in which there is not a legitimate state authority of Muslims.

If we want to look at an analogy, we will find it in the Makkan stage of the Messenger of Allah, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam. If you look at the Makkan period, the Messenger of Allah,

sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, was not making any claims to government authority. He was calling people to tauheed: the unity of Allah. He was calling people to prayer. He was calling people to the purification of their hearts. He was calling people to leave shirk. All this is known as the jihaad of the tongue: jihaad al-kalima; it is not the jihaad of the sword-or now the gun or the atom bomb or whatever. It was the jihaad of the tongue. Allah subhaana wa ta'aala said, "jaahidhum bihi jihaad al-kabir." "Jaahidhum bihi" means to struggle against them with the Quran. In other words, "speak the Quran to them, and struggle against them with the truth in word;" and this was the jihaad of Makkah. You can say in a modern sense that this is speaking with a strong tongue in the face of wrong, in the face of injustices.

When the Prophet, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, went to Medina, a different stage began, and there was now a jihaad of a physical type, a martial struggle where they went out. However, Allah subhaana wa ta'aala says to fight them until the war comes to an end. This type of jihaad has an end in time, and yet jihaad in its broader understanding in the sharia' never ends. The struggle for the sake of Allah never ends as long as somebody is in this abode. This is why jihaad is the expenditure of one's efforts for the sake of good. It means to do good things. It means to exert one's effort in the society to help people, to expend one's wealth-to give charity-to change the conditions around you: if they are bad, make them better. This can be done without martial effort in many places, and this is still a type of jihaad. This is why it is wrong for people to narrow the understanding of jihaad to some limited definition which only gives the understanding of military struggle because that is not what jihaad means in Islam.

Next, I would like to address the issue of our responsibilities. Given our state of weakness and our minority status here, the governmental aspects of the sharia' do not apply to us. We are not legally responsible for the governmental aspects because of our condition here. Given that, what becomes our responsibility? If Allah has removed from us those governmental responsibilities here, what then are the responsibilities that we have? I want to look at two aspects.

Relationships of Muslims with Other Muslims

The first aspect concerns the relationships that we have with one another. These relationships have to be based on brotherhood. They have to be relationships based on love. Since we are minorities here and are few in number, we have to understand that we need to have solidarity. In order for us to have solidarity, there is something that is very important that we must understand about our legal structure, which is the jurisprudence of difference of opinion: fiqh al-khilaaf. We have to look deeply into this because if we understand this, this is a way in which we can be united and have good feelings towards each other and not negative feelings based on our understandings of valid differences of opinion amongst us. This last week in the classes that many of you have attended, we have been looking at usool al fiqh: the foundations upon which our fiqh is based. We looked at many differences of opinion amongst the scholars and how they

were linguistically valid, how they were actually differences of opinion that had foundations; they were not differences based upon empty opinions. They were differences based on real issues that have validity and substance. If we understand that, this will enable us to rise up spiritually to another level of relationship with our fellow Muslims. It will take us to a higher level so that we begin to have differences that are still based on love and mutual respect. We will begin to see that there are different ways of doing things and that there is validity in them all.

We can learn a lesson from the western people who have individuality as one of the foundations of their culture. They respect the rights of people to explore their individuality. There is some good in this understanding, and the Muslims should learn from this even though it is originally from our own tradition. We should see that part of their strength lies in this ability. What this will enable us to do is build bridges. Despite the fact that there are two different opinions which place us in two different positions, this love and mutual respect enables a bridge to be built from one perspective to another perspective, and this creates contact; this creates the ability for us to visit each other, to be together. We should look at these hadiths in which the Messenger of Allah, sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam, said, "the Muslims are one hand;" "the Muslims are strong;" "a Muslim is strong by his brother;" "the Muslims come together as one hand against those who oppose them;" "the Muslims are like one body: if one part becomes afflicted with some illness, the rest of the body shares in that affliction with insomnia and fever."

Furthermore, the Quran says, "Do not disagree:" do not "tanaasi'u;" that is a strong word in Arabic. It is different from "ikhtilaaf: disagreement." "Tanaasi'u" is saying, do not have conflict with one another-not disagreement-but conflict. Do not have conflict with one another, and if you do that, the wind that gives you strength to move forward will dissipate, and you will fail in your task. You will fail in what you want to achieve. Allah subhaana wa ta'aala said, "Rectify what is of between you." That is, Allah says to rectify the differences that you have. Rectify the hearts, so that you come together. The Messenger of Allah, sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam,said, "Al-muslimu akh ul-muslim: The Muslim is a brother of his fellow Muslim." He does not oppress him nor does he give him up to the enemy. Thus, all of these are indications that we should be together in spite of our differences if those differences are based on valid fiqhi differences; and this is why we must look into the jurisprudence related to differences of opinion.

We should look at these differences of opinion like different trains that are carrying different baggage or that are going to different places. These trains could be traveling on the same track at different times. If you do not organize them, the result is a disaster. They will crash. But if you organize them, the trains could be using the same tracks even though they are going to different destinations, have different concerns, and have different purposes. So, the blessing of organizing these differences is that the differences do not cause us to crash into each other so that we do not get anything done in the end.

In a sense, we could look at this like a famous fable. There is a legend about a lion and three bulls who were in the jungle. One of them was white, one was yellow, and one was black. The lion was not able to eat these three bulls because if he came near them, they would all stand up together, and each one of them would face the lion, so he could not eat them. The lion began to think about how he could get them to become divided.

He saw the bulls grazing once, and he approached the black and the yellow ones, and he said, "You know that white one over there" He kind of looks like the people around here. He's different from us. Why don't you let me eat him?"

The two bulls said, "Yeah, go ahead. Get rid of him." So, the lion went and ate the white one. Then, the next day, the lion came to the yellow bull, and he said, "Haven't you noticed that you and I look the same? We have the same color. We're really cousins! And this black one over here-he's different from you. So, why don't you let me eat him?" The yellow one said, "Yeah, you're right. Go ahead."

So, the lion went and ate him. Then, on the third day, the lion came for the yellow bull and said, "I'm going to eat you." The yellow one replied, "I was eaten the day you ate the white one." This is what happens when you get separated. You lose your strength; you lose your power to do anything. We have to realize that what unites us as Muslims is so much greater than what divides us as Muslims. Our areas of difference are very small in relation to our areas of agreement. This is why we should recognize the power of being together setting aside our differences. In the western world, you have arbitrators. In the whole world, you have arbitrators. You don't want to bring in a judge. You want to bring in somebody who arbitrates. What an arbitrator tries to do is get both people to be satisfied so that one does not lose while the other wins. An arbitrator will try to get each group to compromise a little bit, to come to some kind of compromised agreement where they are both content; each one has given up a little bit, but in giving up, they have come together, and there is a win-win situation. You go to the qaadi (judge) as a last resort-"aakhiru dawaa' al-kay: surgery is the final remedy." You do not go to a surgeon the first time. The surgeon is always the last one you go to in the line of specialists. Doctors will try to cure you in other ways first and will send you to the surgeon as a last resort.

One of the disasters of the situation that we find ourselves in here is that you have Muslims making hijra to these lands from the Muslim world bringing their baggage along with them. So, they are bringing all of these problems with them that have nothing to do with the new circumstances they find themselves in. Furthermore, the challenges that they have in these new circumstances are so great that these problems that they are opening up are causing all kinds of trouble for them. Thus, they are not able to unite. They are not able to do things to benefit them because they are arguing about all these ridiculous things. There is something that we can learn

from in the qawaa'id of the Maliki school. [The shaykh gives legal opinions or fatwas from all the schools even though the primary school that he studied was Maliki.] This particular qaa'ida is one that you find only in the Maliki school. This interesting qaa'ida is "jama'til muslimeen taqumu maqaam al-qaadi: a group of Muslims can stand in lieu of a judge." That is, the group can actually take the place of a judge.

[I told the shaykh the other day that there is an American researcher who says that the twelve jury system that we have here in America is from the Maliki school. It was actually taken by western people from the Maliki school. The principle is that a jury of peers will judge you because in those days they did not have qaadis (judges).] The wisdom behind this principle that Imam Malik was indicating is that when people come together, there is a synergistic power of unity in which they will more likely be right in their judgments than wrong. So, if the group makes a judgment, this is why their judgment has the weight and authority, in the Maliki school, of a legal scholar making a judgment based on his knowledge of the sharia'.

The Need for Three Institutions

In order for us to come to a point where we can work together in spite of our differences, or with our differences, we need three institutions. The first one is the institution of fatwa. Fatwa is a non-binding legal opinion. It is not binding on all the Muslims. It is binding on those who ask for it, but it is a non-binding opinion, and there is room for differences and other opinions. The mufti is somebody who gives legal opinions based on the understanding-on the ijtihaad-of all of the different areas of need in the sharia', such as marriage, the rules of buying and selling, the rules of prayer, and the rules of tahaara (cleanliness and purification). The mufti is involved in all of these different things. So, we need a muassasa that deals with this for the Muslims. They need a sound source for guidance when these issues occur in which there are differences.

The second institution we need is a muassasa of tahkeem, which is an institution that issues rulings. In this culture, it is called people's court. A people's court is where the state does not get involved with the case. The parties that are differing agree to go to somebody who will listen to both sides and then make a judgment, and that judgment becomes binding upon them based on the prior agreement of the two. This has been done already in the United States in Texas, so there are Muslims that are doing this, and we should be competing with them in good.

The third institution we need is the sulih. A musassasa deals with sulih which is reconciliation. It deals with bringing people together. Somebody brings the differing groups together and reconciles between them so that they can work together or work separately in peace; thus, they are not fighting each other, undermining each other's work.

All of these institutions are necessary, but it is impossible to get these without having the least amount of respect and desire to bring this about. There has to be a desire for this, and if the desire is not there, then it is a disaster. Furthermore, setting up these particular institutions is not different from setting up other organizations such as those that are created for social issues, for helping the needy, and for doing all the other different things that organizations do. These three institutions are necessary for us in order for us to move on and to resolve a lot of the things that are causing disruption.

Relationships Between Muslims and non-Muslims

*The first thing we looked at was our relationship between Muslims in these lands living together. The second thing we have to look at is the relationship that we have with non-Muslims. Now, an issue that we must look at is that of the abode: the daar. Although there may be some people who are educated in Islam who are aware of this issue of the abode, there are many people who are unaware of this issue. In fact, you will even find some people who are fuqaha, scholars of Islamic law and the legal system, who are unaware of this issue. The issue of the abode is this: most people think that the world is divided into two abodes, the abode of peace and the abode of war. The abode of peace is the land of the Muslims, daar al-Islam, and the abode of war is everywhere else. In Nixon's book that I read a translated version of called *Seizing the Moment*, Nixon wrote a long chapter on the Islamic phenomenon of the modern world. One of the things Nixon said after praising Islam a great deal and saying many nice things about Islam is that one of the most fundamental problems with the Muslims is that they view the world as a dichotomy of two abodes: the abode of peace and the abode of war. So, the central aspect of international relationships with the Muslims is aggression; it is one of war. This idea is wrong. There are three abodes: there is the abode of peace, the abode of war, and then there is the abode of treaty where there is a contractual agreement between two abodes.*

For instance, when I came into this country, they issued me a visa, and I signed something. In the issuance of the visa and my signing of it, a legally binding contract occurred which was a sulih. It was an agreement that when I came into this country, I would obey the laws and would follow the restrictions that this visa demanded that I follow. This was a contractual agreement that is legally binding according even to the divine laws. In looking at this, we have to understand that the relationship between the Muslims living in this land and the dominant authorities in this land is a relationship of peace and contractual agreement-of a treaty. This is a relationship of dialogue and a relationship of giving and taking.

We should remember that when the Messenger of Allah, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, was in Makkah, what he asked for from the Quraish was just that they left him alone to do his da'wa. He said, "Khalu bayni wa baynan naas: Leave me alone to talk to these people. Let me speak to

them; let me call them." And they wouldn't let him do that. However, in this country, the ruling people are allowing you to call people to Islam, and this is exactly what the Messenger of Allah, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, was asking that they allow him to do in Makkah. These people here are allowing you to call people to Islam. They are not prohibiting you. If you go out and proselytize, they don't come and arrest you; they don't punish you; they don't torture you. This idea here should be understood, and the verse from the Quran that we should take as the overriding verse in our relationship with this people is where Allah subhaana wa ta'aala says concerning those who neither fight you because of your religion nor remove you from your homes that He does not prohibit you from showing them birr: righteousness. "Birr" in the Arabic language is the highest degree of ihsaan-it is the 'aala daraja of ihsan. Allah does not prevent you from showing them excellence-moral excellence-in your transactions with them nor from sharing with them a portion of your wealth.

Qadi Abu-Bakr, Ibn 'Atiyah, and others have also said that this is what "antuqsitu 'ilayhim" means. You give non-Muslims qistan: a portion of your wealth. In the early period of Islam, this is ta'lif al-quloob: one of the things that they used to do in order to bring people close. They would give monetary gifts to people whom they saw had inclinations towards Islam in order to draw the hearts. The Messenger of Allah, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, said, "give gifts to each other and love one another." So, the act of giving something naturally inclines the one who is receiving the gift to have feelings of love towards the person who is giving them. The reason for doing these things-for treating these people with respect, showing this good character, and having this good courtesy-is that you will get from amongst them those who respond and will actually enter into Islam. This really is how we should see our relationship. The Messenger of Allah, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, not only gave gifts to some of the mushrikeen in Makkah, he also received gifts from them because his goal was that they become Muslim. He did not want to fight them-that was the last resort. The goal was that they become Muslim, that they enter into Islam.

Also, it is necessary for us to show respect to these people. Islam prohibits us from showing aggression towards people who do not show aggression towards us. The Messenger of Allah, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, said, "Do not enter the houses of the Christians nor eat anything of their fruits except with their permission." Islam prohibits theft; it prohibits fraud; it prohibits cheating; and it prohibits these things in relation to the Muslims and in relation to the non-Muslims. The things that you cannot do to a Muslim, you also cannot do to a non-Muslim. The Messenger of Allah, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, also said, "None of you truly believes until he wants for his brother what he wants for himself." Imam Shabrakhiti ibn Rajul al-Hambali and others mentioned that "brother" here not only means your brother Muslim because this is a close brotherhood of Islam that others are not in, but it refers to the greater and broader brotherhood of our Adamic nature. It is a brotherhood in the sense that we are all from Adam, that Adam is

the father of all us. Understanding this should cause us to realize that we have distant relations with all of these people out there, and all of them are potential Muslims. We should see them as potential Muslims.

Allah, subhaana wa ta'aala, for that reason says, "Call to your Lord with wisdom and with a beautiful admonition, and dispute them in the most excellent of ways." In other words, debate with them and dialogue with them in the most beautiful of ways. Don't be argumentative; don't be cruel; don't be mean; don't humiliate them. Do it ways in which they can listen to the truth, respect the truth, and come to the truth. For this reason, we have to be du'ahtis salaam: people who are callers to peace.

We also have to be good citizens because an excellent Muslim is also an excellent citizen in the society that he lives in. This does not mean that we lose our distinction, that we become completely immersed in the dominant society to where we no longer have our own identity-that is not what I'm calling to. We have to maintain those things that are particular to us as a community, but we also have to recognize that there are other things that are not particular to us but rather general to the human condition that we can partake in; and these things are not things that we should be ignorant and neglectful of but things that we should be engaged in. We have to maintain our roots. We have deep roots in our faith, but at the same time we have to be open to allow others to come into that deep-rootedness.

In addition, we have to recognize that the creation itself is a creation of diversity. It is a creation in which you see variation of colors. Allah did not make all the trees one, and He did not make all the animals one. He diversified the creation. He diversified even our colors and our languages; and He did all this for a wisdom. Not only that, Allah subhaana wa ta'aala made us on different religions and different paths, and He did that intentionally because He said in the Quran, "They continue to be in differences except those whom your Lord has shown His mercy to, and for that reason He created them." So, Allah subhaana wa ta'aala is saying that He actually created us in order that we differ-that there is a wisdom, a divine wisdom in the differences that we have. He created us to show mercy to us as well. So, we have to rise up to this challenge. This is a high challenge, and we as Muslims have to rise up to this challenge.

Another thing that is very important for us to remember is the moderation of Islam. This is a deen of wasatiyyah: it is a deen of moderation. We are a moderate community. We are between the two extremes of excess and deficiency. We are in the middle. The Messenger of Allah, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, said, "Those people who go into matters too deeply will be destroyed." [The shaykh is an expert in the Arabic language, and he said, "those people" are people involved in "tatarruf" or extremism. That is what "tanatau" is.] The Messenger of Allah, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, said, "The extremists are destroyed," and he said, "Beware of

extremism in the deen." The Prophet, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, warned against extremism, and he did not like it. Notice that one of the things that extremism does is that it causes you to lose your rational component so that you are not able to weigh things rationally. Once you have gone to an extreme, you can no longer see things in any balanced way. You have lost that balance of the middle way. This makes you think that what you are doing is right even though it is clearly wrong to others.

As an example, take note of the Khawaarij when there was a difference of opinion between Sayidana 'Ali and Sayidana Mu'awiyah, radi Allahu 'anhuma. They differed. Sayidana 'Ali was the legitimate khalifa, but Mu'awiyah did not take baya' with him; they had differences. So, they called for arbitration. At that point, there was a group of people who were with Sayidana 'Ali, radi Allahu 'anhu, and they were extremists in the deen. They interpreted the Quran on their own whims. When they heard that Sayidana 'Ali had accepted arbitration, they quoted an ayah which says, "La hukma illa lillah: There's no arbitration except by Allah." Allah is the only one that can make judgment. So, they said, how can you call a hakam into this situation for them to decide when it is Allah who will decide this situation? Sayidana 'Ali, radi Allahu 'anhu, replied that the ayah is a true word but that they were using it for a false purpose. They did not listen to him despite that he said and proved to them in the Quran there are many instances where Allah subhaana wa ta'aala calls for arbitration where people must be brought to decide: between marital disputes; on the on the Haj, when somebody breaks a tree or kills an animal; and there are many other examples of that. Their extremism prevented them from seeing the truth, and this is why things have to be weighed in the balance of the sacred law and of the rational, middle understanding of a human being that is balanced in his nature.

This means that we should not fear, but we also should not be aggressive. In other words, we should not be people who are cowards, and there is cowardice in our nature, but nor should we be people who are extremists, going to the other side and being aggressive. An example is people who blow up innocent people in the name of religion and do things that the sharia' is really completely against. These are means that they are using that are unacceptable to the deen of Islam. What they end up doing is creating a completely distorted picture of Islam so that people who are outside of Islam are completely repelled by it and are not attracted to Islam. This is why Imam Shaatabi, radi Allahu 'anhu, wrote in his Muwaafaqaat, one of the greatest books written on usool al-fiqh, that this sharia' lies between excess and between want. It is the middle way; and the Messenger of Allah, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, said, "Khair ul-umoom ausatuha: the best of affairs are those that lie in the middle."

Other Matters of Importance

Next, I want to go into some more detail in looking at the general aspect of our condition here. I already spoke about the two most important concerns which are the relationships between Muslims amongst each other and the relationship between Muslims and the dominant culture. Now I would like to go into a few important points that relate to more detail. The first thing is that it is absolutely essential that you respect the laws of the land that you are living in. There are a number of reasons for this, but the least of this is the principle "al-muslimu la yudillu nafsa: a Muslim does not place himself in a state where he is humiliated." You are living in a land in which the people are very serious about their laws, and if you break the laws, this can result in you being tried as a criminal and being sent to prison and being completely humiliated as a Muslim where non-Muslims are putting you in a cage and preventing you from your own human dignity of freedom and other things. So, it is essential that we remember that.

The second thing I want you to understand is that your circumstances here are not normal circumstances by any means. You are in very unusual circumstances, and because of that, there are certain things that the sharia' allows that it does not allow in times and places where those circumstances do not exist. One of things that is really important for you all here to really take to heart is that the textual positions which we have concerning women that are more lenient should be applied in these lands. We should open up the situation of the woman, not to where it takes us outside the pail of Islam-that is not what I am saying at all-but where we remain within the pail of Islam, and take it to positions that go to the limits of facilitation for the women. Among those are, for instance, the position of the Hanafis stating that a woman can marry without a wali. That is because the conditions of men and women in this land necessitate that type of a ruling. However, the ideal situation is for her to have a wali, and the wali can be any one of the Muslim community male members if she is new in Islam and does not have anybody to do that for her, but the Hanafī position should be seen as a valid position because it is a valid position, and we should not fault women who take that position.

In addition, we should remember that there are positions in Islam that today to many Muslims are quite shocking, such as the decision of Imam Fadari. He was an imam mujtahid: he had his own madhhab. Although it is no longer being applied, he had his own madhhab, and he was recognized by the other Muslims as a valid imam. He believed that a woman could be a qaadi in all the areas of sharia'. He said that there was nothing in the sharia' that would prevent a woman from being a qaadi if she had the intellectual and educational background to fulfill that role. Also, Imam Abu Hanifa radi Allahu 'anhu stated that a woman could be a qaadi in everything other than penal matters-blood and things that are related to blood-but in the other matters that did not concern blood, she could be a qaadi. So, it is important that we really broaden that area, but we should use that broadening to work for Islam and not against Islam, and we should take this into consideration.

Another matter that is important is zakaah. The Muslim organizations in this country need to play an important role in the collecting of zakaah. Even though it is permissible for people in the absence of a legitimate Islamic authority to give zakaah to whom they please, there is a need for zakaah here, and there are organizations that are working in areas which are beneficial and are working to help people. [The shaykh used the examples of Rahima and Zaytuna who are doing this type of work because he has come here for a short time, and he knows only those two names, but this includes the many, many organizations in this country that are working for Islam, that help people, and that know the needs of their community.] These are organizations people go to when looking for help. Whereas they might not go to you and know that you have zakaah to give, they will go to that organization because it is a name; they know of it; and they will say, "I need zakaah." So, those organizations should be able to facilitate the movements of zakaah money to the people who are worthy of taking the zakaah. That is important, and obviously, these organizations which you give to should be ones that you feel are trustworthy.

[Next, the shaykh gave an example of a situation that he was involved in where there was a need for facilitation that related to the jumu'a prayer.] I am a member of a fiqh counsel in Europe which has an number of scholars including Dr. Yusuf al-Qardawi; it is called The Counsel of Islamic Legal Rulings in Europe. We go to Europe for our meetings, and this year, we met in Germany. One of the issues that was placed in front of us was the issue of laborers who work in factories and are not able to go the jumu'a at the time it is done. The council agreed that in these types of circumstances, we need to look at the easier rulings. For instance, in the madhhab of Ahmed ibn Hambal, radi Allahu 'anhu, the khutba is permitted to be delivered before the actual time of the prayer comes in. We need to take rukhas, which are legal licenses, to facilitate for people because of our conditions here-we are not living in a Muslim country where the ruler is encouraging the practice of the prayer and actually making sure that the prayer is being said in its right time-[and we know that rulers in many countries don't do that even in the Muslim world now any way]. This facilitation also includes the joining of prayer. It is acceptable to join Dhur and 'Asr at the time that they share according to Imam al-Qaraafi in his majestic work, TheKhira. Imam al-Qaraafi is a famous Maliki qaadi, and it is understood in the Maliki school that there is a time in which the prayers are shared between Dhur and 'Asr. There is also such a time between Maghrib and 'Isha. There is a valid opinion amongst the recognized fuqaha of the sunni school-not of the shia' school-that enables the delaying of Maghrib until the time of the 'Isha prayer when they meet at that point. So, in circumstances where people really have a difficult time, it is better that they join their prayers rather than lose their prayers altogether because if you do not present those options for them, there are people who say, "I can't pray. It's too hard. I'm working and this and that;" and their iman might be weak. So, in these types of situations, there has to be facilitation for these people.

What is prohibited in Islam is the joining of all five prayers at one time. You cannot do that. You cannot do that. Some people wait until the end of the day and pray them altogether. No. You have to pray in the times that the fuqaha have allowed for in the joining of the times. [This should not be an excuse for people to say, "Oh great! The shaykh just gave me a fatwa, and now I don't need to worry." He is talking about situations that are really difficult for people. He is not just saying go out and do what you want. No. You know your deen is your most important thing that you have; and your prayer is the most important thing in your deen after your tauheed; and whoever does not guard the prayer has not guarded his deen. The prayer has times, and they are prescribed times. But what the shaykh is saying simply is there are situations where people really do have a difficult time, and the Messenger of Allah, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, in a sahih hadith in Bukhari according to Ibn 'Abbas, radi Allahu 'anhu, joined the prayers. They said to Ibn 'Abbas, "Why did he do that?" He replied, "So that his ummah would not have difficulty and feel bad about doing this later," and he said, "the Messenger of Allah, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, was concerned about even the last of his ummah." The Messenger, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, in a hadith, said, "Ikhwaani, ikhwaani: my brothers, my brothers!" at the Kabah, and Abu Dar, radi Allahu 'anhu, said, "Aren't we your brothers?" But he replied, "No, you're my sahaba (companions)." He said, "My brothers come after me. They believe in me and they've never seen me."]

[The shaykh had given me permission to add anything that I had thought was important, so he just reiterated what I had added about the importance of prayer.] You should not make the joining of your prayer a norm, but in certain excruciating circumstances, that is a valid position which is recognized, and it becomes an option for people having difficulty. Another thing to remember is the importance of your neighbors. Your neighbor has rights over you. These rights are inclusive of the Jewish, Christian, and other neighbors you may have. There are many examples of that, but a story that comes to my mind is that of Abu Hanifa, radi Allahu 'anhu, who is called imam al-'aadham: the greatest imam.

It is well known that Abu Hanifa, radi Allahu 'anhu, did tahajjut every night. He would spend his night reciting the Quran. He had a neighbor who was an alcoholic, and he used to drink a lot and sing love poems. This used to bother the imam. But one day, the imam did not hear this man's revelry, so he went and asked about him. They said, "Oh, so-and-so. They took him to jail." So, the very well respected imam went to the jail. He was the most respected imam and qaadi at the time in that place. When the ruler found out the imam went to the jail, he asked for the reason and was told that the imam was concerned about his neighbor who had been arrested. So, the ruler said to release the man, and he was released. The neighbor then asked Abu Hanifa why he did that, and he replied, "Because you have a right upon me as a neighbor, and I have not been neglectful of that." That was the reason that the neighbor made tauba to Allah subhaana wa ta'aala.

Next, there is another subject that may be a little difficult for some people to understand, even for some people of knowledge, but I am not in any way claiming to have more knowledge than those people, and I am certain there are people who have come here who have greater knowledge than me. This subject concerns the difference between ahlu l-dhimma and ahlu l-'aahad. Ahlu l-dhimma are people who are in a minority status in the Muslim lands. Ahlu l-'aahad are Muslim people in minority status in non-Muslim lands. Each of these groups has different rules that apply to it. In relation to the people of 'aahad, there are things that we have to understand. [The shaykh explained that he is giving you his personal opinion, and it is the amaanah (trust) of the translator to relate that.] I feel it is important that people are concerned with political candidates in this country. If we support the candidates who are known to have positive attitudes towards the Muslims and who are supportive of Muslim causes and even those who are just better people than the opposing candidates, in the usooli knowledge, this would be considered taking the lesser of two evils. In a non-Muslim situation, voting and not voting are both not good situations, but as a community that does not engage themselves and yet is affected by the political instruments, the lack of participation can end up being a greater evil than the participation itself. This is something that has to be looked at and balanced. In my opinion, it is probably a greater evil not to be participating at all and to simply be disengaged from the process. So, as Muslims, people should come together as one hand and create blocks to where they can try to have some influence to the best of their ability.

Finally, I ask that Allah subhaana wa ta'aala, in sha' Allah, gives me taufiq in what I have said and that I have not said anything inappropriate. I ask that that it benefits me and also benefits you in sha' Allah. [Then the shaykh made a du'ah that Allah subhaana wa ta'aala, in sha' Allah, accept this from us and give us taufiq. Jazakum Allahu khairan.]

About Shaykh Abdallah

Shaykh Abdallah bin Bayyah, hafidhu Allah, is an extremely well-known and well-respected scholar amongst scholars. In fact, he is a scholars' scholar since many of his students are actually considered scholars now in the Muslim world. His students study extremely difficult texts with him that even very well qualified scholars are not capable of understanding with any facility. Shaykh Abdallah bin Bayyah grew up in one of the eastern provinces in West Africa in Mauritania. From a very young age, he showed extreme gifts intellectually and a profound ability to absorb a lot of information and a lot of the text. During his studies, he memorised an extraordinary number of texts. Then, at a very early age, he was appointed with a group of people to study legal judgements in Tunis and went there for a period of time. When he returned to Mauritania, he became a minister of education and later, a minister of justice. He was also one of the vice-presidents of the first president of Mauritania. However, due to the conditions in Mauritania and the military change of governments that took place, he began to teach, and he

ended up going to Saudi Arabia and becoming a distinguished professor at The University of Usul al-Fiqh. The shaykh is presently involved in several organizations in the Muslim world, such as the organization which is known as Al Majma' al-Fiqhi, which is comprised of a body of scholars that come together from all over the Muslim world and from all the different madhhabs and different viewpoints; they analyze and study a lot of the modern issues to come up with Islamic solutions to the issues confronting modern Muslims in the modern world. Shaykh Abdallah is also involved in writing. He has written several books and has delivered lectures all over the world. He has expertise in a lot of areas that have been unfortunately ignored by the vast amount of contemporary scholars. One of the areas of expertise that he has is in what is know as fiqh al-aqaliyaat which is the fiqh or juristic rulings related to Muslims living as a religious minority with a dominant alien territory. Because the Muslims tended to prefer hijra to countries where Muslims were the majority, there are not a lot of scholars that work in the area of dealing with how Muslims in minority areas should actually live their lives and how they should behave when confronted with issues that often are in contradistinction to their din.

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/Muslims-Living-in-Non-Muslim-Lands-#sthash.06xZOSUd.dpuf>

Transcript for Men and Women

Transcript Details

Event Name: Men and Women

Transcript Author:

Description:

Date Transcribed: 3/1/2008 12:00:00 AM

Original URL:

Many people have long held the erroneous notion that men are better than women. In *Men & Women*, Hamza Yusuf makes clear the positions and roles of men and women in society according to the Quran and Sunnah and sheds much-needed light on several often misunderstood Quranic verses and hadiths concerning the relationship between the two.

His eye-opening discussion of issues such as the hijab, marital rights, and domestic violence, will prove invaluable for all listeners, particularly couples who want to improve understanding in their marriages and individuals who want to be reassured of Islam's honor of women.

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

Before I talk about what I want to talk about I just want to dispel a myth, I am sure most of you are aware that it is a myth but some of you might not be and that is the idea that has somehow crept into Muslim culture that boys are better than girls or actually more preferable and I think part of the problems that we have in our Muslim communities have to do with cultural problems and I would say that if they are universalised they just manifest differently according to different cultures.

The United States is also a country that suffers from that same problem in its view and attitudes towards women and in fact Dr Abdul Hakim Winter wrote a paper that is really worth reading called “boys will be boys” and in that paper he describes the fact that it is actually Islam that

prevents this very insidious idea from taking over because if you look outwardly at the situation that we have the vast majority of men have certain qualities that are superior to the vast majority of women in the outward and most of them have to do with physical qualities and in fact the physiology of women's design, it is not designed for rough sports and one of the major problems occurring in America because young girls are beginning to play contact sports and rough sports is the increase in the number of sport related injuries that actually related to physical structures, the difference between the knees of men and the knees of women, the difference between the hips, female hips are very different. The shoulder blades, if you look at the basic bone structure of a woman and you look at the basic bone structure of men they are different, there is a physical difference.

Now obviously there are certain women that are very strong and there are certain men that they are weak and so it is something that is more of bell curve type of understanding but one of the things that Dr Winter points out in that paper is that when you have a society that begins to create a culture of this outward over-achievement that basically he says it is the women will eventually suffer greatly because they are compelled to compete with men in areas that there was never meant to be any competition and this is why there is this attempt now to reach this threshold where females can actually compete in make sports categories so there is the idea of finally getting a woman who can make it pro-basketball in the men's league. Now, as of now it was a great historical event when this poor woman dunked a basketball in a basketball game recently, it was considered like this immense event that she was able to do this dunk that occurs every single day all over the country by men playing basketball. Is this what we want out women to be doing and competing in and what Islam does it creates a competition not in the outward but in the inward and in that it is the men who are disadvantaged which is really interesting. So the opposite happens.

If you look at a sports track, if you watch an Olympic sport or even in high school, you have the people in the outward lap are given a head start because the people in the inward lap have a shorter run on that first lap. By the second lap because they can all move into the inward lap it will equal out but they put the runner who was in that outward lap, they give him a head start so it equals out and that is why men are given things that they do spiritually like the quwamma. You see men are there to maintain women, that is that little head start that they get and that is hwy Allah mentioned that in the Quran that giving men the infaq was something that He have a fadal there. A fadal is an excess because men need that in a relationship in which the woman is raising children, a woman is having childbirth. A woman has a jihad according to the hadith which is sahih in her house that is ongoing and many men will never get the opportunity to

actually by involved in a jihad which is one of the highest maqams in Islam and so Allah gives men a head start spiritually because when they reach out on yaum al qiyammah, it is basically equalled out in a lot of things.

One of the other things is one of the greatest qualities of the human heart is riqah is a type of brittleness and the Prophet praised the Yemenis because they are more brittle hearted than other people in other words they wept easier and that was better for them in terms of their relationship with Allah because one the descriptions that Allah gives about people that love Allah is that they weep easily. Now spiritually women have a total advantage over men in that area because most men have a very difficult time weeping and the Prophet actually said that if you cannot do it then at least fake it.

Walaysa al-dhakarun ka'l-untha

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/Men-and-Women#sthash.7dNie5DQ.dpuf>

Transcript for Love even those that Revile you

Transcript Details

Event Name: Love even those that Revile you

Transcript Author: Q-News

Description: Magazine Article

Date Transcribed: 12/31/2003 12:00:00 AM

Original URL: <http://www.q-news.com/352.pdf>

Transcript Text

The convenient response to those who revile your religion is to return the favor. The more virtuous position however is to forgive. Forgiveness as you know, while lessin virtue when compared to love, nevertheless, can result in love. Love, by definition, does not require forgiveness. What many Muslims today seem to forget is that ours is a religion of love and our Prophet, upon him be peace and blessings, was the Habib, the Beloved. How did love, the defining virtue of our community, come to be replaced by an urge to redress wrongs, to punish instead of to forgive?

It is the result of Muslims seeing themselves as victims. Victimization is a defeatist mentality. It's the mentality of the powerless. The word victim is from the Latin "victima" which carries with it the idea of the one who suffers injury, loss, or death due to a voluntary undertaking.

In other words, victims of one's own actions. Muslims never really had a mentality of victimization. From a metaphysical perspective, which is always the first and primary perspective of a Muslim, there can be no victims. We believe that all suffering has a redemptive value.

If the tendency among Muslims is to view themselves as victims which appears to me as a fall from grace, what virtue must we then cultivate to dispense with this mental and physical statethat we now find ourselves in?

The virtue of patience is missing. Patience is the first virtue after tawba or repentance. Early Muslim scholars considered patience as the first maqam or station in the realm of virtues that a person entered into.

Patience in Islam means patience in the midst of adversity. A person should be patient in what has harmed or afflicted him. Patience means that you don't lose your composure or your composure. If you look at the life of the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, you will never ever find him losing his composure.

Patience was a hallmark of his character. He was 'the unperturbed one' which is one of the meanings of halim: wa kaana ahlaman-naas. He was the most unperturbed of humanity. Nothing phased him either inwardly or outwardly because he was with Allah in all his states. Patience is a beautiful virtue...the cry of Prophet Yaqub... "fa sabran jamil." Patience, it appears, is not an isolated virtue but rather it is connected to a network of virtues. Should Muslims focus on this virtue at the expense of the other virtues?

The traditional virtues of a human being were four and Qadi Ibn Al-Arabi considered them to be the foundational virtues or the ummahatul fadaa'il of all of humanity. They are: prudence, courage, temperance, and justice.

Prudence, or rather practical wisdom, and courage, are defining qualities of the Prophet. He, upon him be peace and blessings, said that God loves courage even in the killing of a harmful snake. Temperance is the ability to control oneself. Incontinence, the hallmark of intemperance, is said to occur when a person is unable to control himself. In modern medicine it is used for someone who can't control his urine or feces. But not so long ago the word incontinence meant a person who was unable to control his temper, appetite or sexual desire. Temperance is the moral virtue that moderates one's appetite in accordance with prudence. In early Muslim scholarship on Islamic ethics, justice was considered impossible without the virtues of prudence, courage and temperance.

Generosity as a virtue is derived from courage because a generous person is required to be courageous in the face of poverty. Similarly, humility is a derivative from temperance because the humble person will often restrain the urge to brag and be a 'show-off' because he or she sees their talents and achievements as a gift from Allah and not from themselves.

Patience as a virtue is attached to the virtue of courage because the patient person has the courage to endure difficulties. So 'hilm' (from which you get 'halim'), often translated as forbearance or meekness if you wish, is frowned upon in our society. Yet it is the virtue we require to stem the powerful emotion of anger. Unrestrained anger often leads to rage and rage can lead to violence in its various shades.

Our predecessors were known for having an incredible degree of patience while an increasing number of us are marked with an extreme degree of anger, resentment, hate, rancor and rage. These are negative emotions which present themselves as roadblocks to living a virtuous life.

A patient human being will endure tribulations, trials, difficulties, hardships, if confronted with them. The patient person will not be depressed or distraught and whatever confronts him will certainly not lead to a loss of comportment or adab.

Adab, as you know, is everything. Allah says in the Quran: 'Isbiru was-sabiru.' "Have patience and enjoin each other to patience." The beauty of patience is that 'inallaha ma'assabirin' Allah is with the patient ones. If God is on your side you will always be victorious. Allah says in the Quran "Ista`inu bi-sabiri was-salat." Isti'aana is a reflexive of the Arabic verb `aana which is "to help oneself." Allah is telling us to help ourselves with patience and prayer.

This is amazing because the Prophet, peace be upon him, said "if you take help, take help from God alone." And so in the Quran Allah says: ista`inu bi-sabiri was-salaat. This means taking help from patience and prayer because that is the means by which Allah has given you to take help from Him alone.

How is it then that a person sees himself as a victim when all calamities, difficulties and trials, are ultimately tests from Allah. This does not mean the world is free of aggression and that victims have suddenly vanished. What I'm talking about is a person's psychology in dealing with hardships.

The sacred law has two perspectives when looking at acts of aggression that are committed by one party against another. When it is viewed by those in authority the imperative is to seek justice. However, from the perspective of the wronged, it is not to seek justice but instead to forgive.

Forgiveness, `afwa, pardon, is not a quality of authority. A court is not set up to forgive. It's the plaintiff that's required to forgive if there is going to be any forgiveness at all. Forgiveness will not come from the Qadi or the judge. The court is set up to give justice but Islam cautions us not to go there in the first place because 'by the standard which you judge so too shall you be judged.' That's the point. If you want justice, if you want God, the Supreme Judge of all affairs, to be just to others on your behalf, then you should know that your Lord will use the same standard with you.

Nobody on the 'Day of Arafat' will pray: "Oh God, be just with me." Instead you will hear them crying: O Allah, forgive me, have mercy on me, have compassion on me, overlook my wrongs. Yet, these same people are not willing to forgive, have compassion and mercy on other creatures of God.

We are not a people that are required to love wrong-doers. We must loath wrong actions, but at the same time we should love for the wrong-doers guidance because they are creatures of God and they were put here by the same God that put us here. And Allah says in the Quran “we made some of you a tribulation for others, will you then not show patience.” In other words, God set up the scenario, and then asked the question: ‘will you then not show patience?’ Will you subdue the inordinate desire for vengeance to achieve a higher station that is based on a conviction that you will be forgiven by God if only you can bring yourself to forgive others?

Imam Al-Ghazali and earlier Miskawayh in his *Tahdhib al-akhlaq*, argued that for these virtues to be effective they had to be in harmony. Otherwise, they said, virtues would quickly degenerate into vices. Do you think that these virtues exist today among Muslims but that they are out of balance? For example, the Arabs in the time of the Prophet had courage, but without justice it was bravado. Prudence without justice is merely shrewdness. Do you think that Muslims are clamoring for justice but have subsumed the virtues of temperance and prudence?

Yes. Muslims want courage and justice but they don't want temperance and prudence. The four virtues relate to the four humors in the body. Physical sickness is related to spiritual sickness and when these four are out of balance, spiritual and moral sickness occurs. So when courage is the sole virtue, you no longer have prudence. You are acting courageously but imprudently and it's no longer courage but impetuosity. It appears as courage but it is not. A person who is morally incapable of controlling his appetite has incontinence and thus he cannot be prudent nor courageous because part of courage is to constrain oneself when it is appropriate. Imam Al-Ghazali says that courage is a mean between impetuosity and cowardice. The same is true for incontinence. The person who has no appetite is not a temperate person but an impotent person and that's also a disease. Someone may have immense business acumen but uses it to accumulate massive amounts of wealth. That is not a prudent person but a crafty or clever person. Prudence is a mean between the extremes of stupidity and craftiness or what the Arabs call *makr*. The *maakir* is the one who is afflicted with the same condition that has afflicted Iblis the *maakir*, the clever. The interesting point to note about the four virtues is that you either take them all or you don't take them at all. It's a packaged deal. There is a strong argument among moral ethicists that justice is the result of the first three being in perfect balance.

That's Miskawayh?

Yes, *Miskawayh* and Aristotle as well.

What I've realized is that people who don't have patience are often ridden with anxiety and tend to behave as if they can control the outcome of events in their lives. They even think that destiny is in their hands. They argue that if you do this and this you will achieve power, as if we have the ability to empower ourselves. Most of the contemporary Islamic movements seem to think that without state power a moral or an ethical Islamic society is impossible to achieve. Why do you think that is the case?

I think victimization is the result of powerlessness. The point is that powerlessness is our state. Powerlessness is a good state, not a bad one because all power is with God alone and He will make you powerful or powerless. I'll give you an example. If you go into the Alhambra Palace in Granada you will see written everywhere *al`izu-lillah* which means that strength, dignity and power is with God alone. By the time you get to the end of the last room it is changed to *al`izu li maulana Abi `Abdillah* or power and authority is with the protector Abu Abdallah, the last Caliph of Andalus or what is now southern Spain. So it begins with power and strength for God alone and it ends with power, strength, and dignity is for our master Abu Abdillah. The point here is that if you want power, God won't give it to you, but if you want to be powerless for the sake of God, God will empower you. That's just the way it works and here I am talking about the people of God.

Allah has divided the world into two types of people - those who are God-focused and those who are focused on other than God. The people that are focused on God will always follow certain principles and God will always give them the same results. The people who think that they are focused on God, but in fact are focused on other than God will never get success from God. The reason is that if they did indeed get success from God they would end up disgracing the religion of God by claiming to be people of God.

There are many outwardly religious people on the planet that think they are the people of God and they get frustrated when they are denied victory. This causes them often to get angry and you see their methods becoming more and more desperate. They fail to recognize that authority is not given to them because they're not truly focused on God. They are instead focused on worldly power and they are self-righteous and self-centered in their arrogance, thinking that they are right while everyone else is wrong. The verse in the Quran that sums this up is in Sura Baqarah. Allah says, "They say no one will enter paradise unless they be a Jew or a Christian, These are vain wishes. Say to them, bring your evidence if you are speaking the truth. "Balaa man aslama wajhahu lillahi wahuwa muhsinun." "No, rather the one who resigns his entire being to God is the one." Ibn Juzay al Kalbi says: *aslama wajhahu* means he who submits his entire being to God which is *Ihsan* or excellence in one's worship.

When the human being is in a state of submission - *wa huwa muhsinun* - everything that comes from him is beautiful and virtuous. *Ihsan* - ethics, virtuous, beauty, excellence - indicates that a

humanbeing will have his reward from his Lord. This is not from the God of a religion, but the God of the individual in a state of absolute submission."Upon them there is no fear nor will they grieve."To me, this is the greatest testimony that Islam is not about identity politics. Some among us want to reduce Islam to identity politics.They label themselves and point accusing fingers at each other. Allah says "indeed the one who has resigned his entire being to God and is virtuous, that is the one whose reward is with his Lord and upon them shall come no fear nor will they grieve.Replace the Jew and the Christian for some modern-day Muslims and you end up with the same phenomenon described above. The hadith says you will follow the Jews and the Christians to the extent that if they go down a lizard's hole you'll go down with them. This is an authentic hadith. The hadith says every child is born with an inherent nature.The Prophet, upon him be peace and blessings,didn't say every child is born a Muslim as a sociological identity. It says every child is born in a state of fitra and it's the parents who determine its sociological category, to give it a modern interpretation.

You have painted a very interesting landscape in terms of Muslim behavior in the contemporary period but we are seeing evidence of resentment among some Muslims today which is very strange indeed. I am wondering how this might be related to a sense of victimization?

Of course it is. Look for example at the word injury. It comes from *injuria*, a Latin word that means unjust. So if I perceive my condition as unjust it is contrary to the message of the Quran. Whatever circumstances we find ourselves in we hold ourselves as responsible. It gets tricky to navigate especially when it comes to the oppressor and the oppressed.

The Prophet, upon him be peace and blessings, along with the early Muslim community, spent 13 years purifying themselves in Mecca. These were years of oppression and thus serious self-purification accompanied by an ethic of nonviolence, forbearance, meekness, and humility. They were then given permission to migrate and to defend themselves. At this point they were not a people out to get vengeance and they were certainly not filled with resentment because they saw everything as coming from God. I'm not talking about being pleased with injustice because that's prohibited. At the same time we accept the world our Lord has put us into and we see everything as being here purposefully, not without purpose, whether we understand it or not.

We believe evil is from the *Qadr* (decree) of Allah and it's for a purpose, but there are two sides to choose from - the side of good and the side of evil. In order for you not to fall into the Manichean fallacy, God reminds you that not only is the struggle an external struggle but evil is an internal struggle as well. Therefore, those very things that you see on the outside they are also on the inside and to make it even clearer, the struggle inside is the greater Jihad because if you are not involved in the internal struggle you are not going to be able to fight the external one.

Maulana Rumi said whenever you read Pharaoh in the Quran don't think that he is some character that lived in the past, but seek him out in your own heart.

So, if we've got all these negatives, vices, not virtues active in our hearts, love, it appears is an impossible task.

The modern Christian fundamentalists always talk about Islam as a religion devoid of love. It's a very common motif in these religious fundamentalist books that attack Islam. They say "our religion is the religion of love and Islam is the religion of hate, animosity, and resentment." Unfortunately, many Muslims have adopted it as their religion, but that doesn't mean resentment has anything to do with Islam.

Love (*Mahabba*) is the highest religious virtue in Islam. Imam Ghazali said that it is the highest *maqam* or spiritual station. It is so because trust, *zhud* (doing with out), fear, and hope are stations of this world and so long as you are in this world these stations are relevant, but once you die they can no longer serve you. Love is eternal because love is the reason you were created. You were created to adore God. That's why in Latin the word adore which is used for worship in English is also a word for love, adoration. You were created to worship

God, in other words, to love Him because you can't truly adore something or worship something that you don't love. If you are worshipping out of fear, like Imam al Ghazali says, it's not the highest level of worship, but its lowest.

In other words, if you are worshipping God out of fear, if the reason that you are doing things is because you are afraid of Him, that he is going to punish you, that's the lowest level of worship. That's why it was said about the Prophet's companion Suhaib al Rumi that had there been no fire or paradise he still would have worshipped Allah.

A vast number of young Muslims today who have the energy to run down the road of hate do so thinking that it is a display of their Iman. What do you say to help them understand that hating wrongs has to be balanced with the virtues of mercy, justice, forgiveness, generosity, etc.

I think one has to recognize that there are definitely things out there to hate but we have to be clear about hating the right things for the right reasons in the right amount. The challenge is to get your object of hate right and hate it for the right reason. In other words, there are things that we should hate for the sake of God. Oppression is something that you should hate. Its not *haram* to hate the oppressor, but don't hate them to the degree that it prevents you from being just because that is closer to *Taqwa* (awe of Allah). The higher position is to forgive for the sake of God.

God gives you two choices -- the high road or the low road - both of them will get you to paradise. We should strive for the highest. Anger is a useful emotion. God created anger in order that we could act and respond to circumstances that need to be changed. Indignation is a beautiful word. Righteous indignation is a good quality and even though it is misused in modern English it's actually a good thing. It means to be angry for the right reasons and then it is to be angry to the right degree because Allah says, "Do not let the loathing of a people prevent you from being just."

In other words get angry but don't let that anger get the best of you, don't allow it to overcome you to the point where you want vengeance because vengeance is God's alone. Allah is *al-Muntaqim*, The Avenger of wrongs. Human beings are not here to avenge wrongs they are here to redress wrong, not to avenge them.

The ideal of loving those who revile you is the station of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. In the midst of the worst battle of his career, the battle of Uhud, he prayed, "Oh God guide my people for they do not know what they are doing." He could not have uttered that if he had hatred in his heart. He could not have embraced Wahshi as his brother, the man who killed his most beloved uncle, if he had hatred in his heart. He could not have taken the oath of allegiance from Hind who ordered and paid for the assassination of Hamza and then bit into his liver to spite the Blessed Prophet if he had hatred in his heart. He took her oath of allegiance and she became a sister in faith. The Messenger of Allah is the best example.

He is the paragon who said:

"None of you truly believes until he loves for his fellow man what he loves for himself." And the reason why I say fellow man is that I think it's a very accurate translation because Imam an Nawawi said that he is your brother because we are all children of Adam and Eve. So we should want for our fellow man guidance, a good life, and a good afterlife. None of you truly believes, in other words our Iman is not complete until we love for others what we love for ourselves and that includes the Jews, Christians, Buddhists and the Hindus.

That breaks down the 'us versus them' paradigm that tend to inform the way Muslims see the world and themselves in it. That has been taken to a new level now in some of our mosques where the kuffar is a degree under and we don't have to pay attention to anything they say either about us or to us. Did our Prophet, upon him be peace and blessing, behave like this at all? I mean was he dismissive of anyone who wasn't from his community? It seems preposterous to convince anyone that we care about their welfare when we deride them.

The point is that if you want to guide them then you have to be concerned with the way they perceive you. You have to be concerned with how they feel. The reason the Prophet upon him be peace and blessings, did not kill hypocrites was because he did not want the non-Muslims to say

Muhammad kills his companions as a way of scaring people from entering into Islam. So he preferred an action that will cause non-Muslims to look at Islam as a religion they would prefer to enter. The Prophet, peace be upon him was concerned to such an extent with what others thought that when one of his companions said that the Persians and Byzantines did not take letters seriously unless they had a seal on them, he told his companion to make him a seal. He was concerned about how he presented himself to the people.

Once he was combing his hair and Aisha, his blessed wife, asked him why he did that before he went out and he said my Lord commanded me to do this. In other words, to go out looking presentable to people is not vanity. Some Muslims get caught up in clothes and they get upset when others wear a tie and suit. They think it's hypocrisy and that it is inappropriate. On the contrary, if one's intention is correct, it's actually an act of worship because you are doing it in order to present Islam, not yourself. You are, like the Prophet, recognizing that you are an ambassador of a religion and it becomes like the seal that the Prophet, upon him be peace and blessing, pressed onto the letters.

Many Muslims have divided the world into two groups - us and them. They will support Saddam Hussein because he's a Muslim. In other words, they will support a man who may have killed more Muslims than any Muslim leader in the history of Islam or perhaps all of them put together. The argument from this segment of our Muslim community is that "I will back a mass murderer and go to a demonstration with his picture because he's a Muslim and other people are *Kuffar*." On the other hand, many Americans will back unjust American intervention simply because they believe "my country right or wrong." Both sentiments is a form of tribalism and we are people of faith in God Almighty, not people of tribal allegiance.

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/Love-even-those-that-Revile-you#sthash.Yd035v5r.dpuf>

Transcript for Lambs to the Slaughter with Muhammad Shareef

Transcript Details

Event Name: Lambs to the Slaughter with Muhammad Shareef

Transcript Author: Munawar Ali

Description: This title causes a lot of confusion. There are 2 Lambs to the Slaughter Speeches. One with Sh Hamza in Toronto. This second one with Muhammad Shareef. They are both amazing speeches, but I prefer this one with Muhammad Al-Shareef.

Date Transcribed: 1/1/2006 12:00:00 AM

Original URL:

Moderator>

<Greetings in Arabic>

<Basmallah in Arabic>

<Salaat un Nabi in Arabic>I feel inordinately honored, to introduce to you tonight, my teacher, Sheikh Hamza Yusuf.

I think, for most of you, SHEIKH HAMZA YUSUF needs really no introduction, but for a few of us, who need such an intro, I'll go ahead and say a few things about him.

SHEIKH HAMZA YUSUF was born in Wala-Wala in Washington, and he was raised here in California, in the Bay Area.

He was raised in the Greek Catholic tradition...and at the age, in his late teens, he reverted to Islam.

In his pursuit of his passion for, classical Islamic thought, SHEIKH HAMZA YUSUF traveled widely in the heartland of Islam.

And he studied in Mauritania and many other parts of the Muslim world in the classical Islamic tradition.

SHEIKH HAMZA YUSUF is presently the Imam of Masjid ul Noor in Santa Clara, there he conducts, classes in Arabic and Islam.

And he's fast becoming one of the most sought after speakers. not only in the United States, but all over the world.

We're very happy to have him here and we're pleased to pay attention to what he has to say to us tonight, regarding the subject of education and our children. Thank you very much, Asalamualaikum.

SHEIKH HAMZA Yusuf>:

Asalamualaikum Warahmatullah.

<Basmallah in Arabic>

<Salaat un Nabi in Arabic>

I bear witness that there is no God but Allah, and that Muhammad, Salallawalasalam is his last and final messenger.

What I'd initially like to start out is just to say what I would like to do, and also to indicate that really, my talk is a, a prelude to Muhammad Shareef's talk, which will focus essentially on the West African intellectual tradition.

Which is an extremely important tradition, in terms of education and understanding the relevancy of that tradition in terms of modern. In the light of modern education and what it has done to our children.

What I would like to say for people, and I know the vast majority of people here, follow the Islamic tradition, I would like to say, I think that the topic that I'm talking about ...ah..is...concerns individuals irrespective of their tradition, and it certainly concerns anyone who has children, and who has a concern about children. Which I hope that is the vast majority of people in this country and around the world.

Ah, the topic itself is titled "Lambs to the Slaughter", and the reason that I chose that topic, is because, in many ways, I feel that children truly are, in a sense, lambs headed for a wretched massacre of the light that resides in them.

Ah...it is, a...divine light, and I believe whole heartedly that the child is a, uh, receptacle of this divine light, the purity and the innocence that resides in children is something ah..to be really, awe inspiring if one reflects on the nature, or our children and yet we become acutely aware of transformations that occur.

In other words, what is it that takes a child from such an early age, of..bright, full of life in love, and ah,... can end up in such a tragic condition.

And what we're noticing increasingly, in in modern civilization, is the age of the, what I would term the race of innocence, is increasingly being lowered.

In other words, year by year, we're seeing a type of degradation that's occurring, concerning our children, and and they're losing their innocence much earlier, then at previous historical periods.

And that is certainly true in the Islamic world, ah, that children traditionally were ah..., protected and guarded. And seen literally as, in what is termed in the Quran, an Amana, or a trust, that is given to the uh... Parents, and to the society as a whole.

Ah..., my talk, uh..., the reason that I put this up, was to create a mood. Because I feel in many ways, unlike an intellect filled with knowledge and light, this is basically, ah..., what the modern creation, ah..., this monster, that ah...television and modern education have so successfully created, is basically a..., something that is filled with pop tunes, with pop culture, with, ah..., slogans, and ah, ... they're increasingly perfecting their techniques at how to anchor those slogans in the subconscious of human beings, and this is what this ad is. This actually comes out of a magazine, that is not for popular consumption, uh...you cannot actually buy it from a local store, ah, you could probably get it at a good library, but it's actually a magazine that is done for people working directly in the advertising community. And if you'll note that basically the pitch is, if you use country music, which is the fastest growing genre of music in the US, ah, for your jingles, then this a way of anchoring brand names, anchoring commercial slogans into the subconscious of the individuals that happen to be exposed to those jingles.

And It's been noted that between the ages of 3 and 18, children will witness over 500K commercials. 500k commercials...this is basically, really the, the values that are being transmitted to the youth, are being transmitted through the commercials. And the commercials actually have been analyzed wonderfully by brilliant uhmm...ah, analysts, that are very clever in their dissection of the meanings and encodings and the signifying aspects of all of this madness. And most of them are actually quite frightened by it, and that's why they got into the field that they did. And, The interesting thing about one of the books that I read on advertising, is that it actually said, uhmm...that in the end, the consumer...becomes the consumed.

And this is exactly what this ad indicates. Because, what is being sold here, is human beings. What is being sold here, is the minds of individuals, All over the country. This is the product, this is the commodity that this magazine is selling. It is selling a way to invade...the human brain, and anchor a product in the brain so that that individual, when they're walking in a store, somehow will purchase one type of product as opposed to another, in the cornucopia of products that we have in the US.

And many other, the fascinating reading, if someone wants to read this, I would recommend it, because really, you will you will be taken into the minds of these people, which in many ways, is actually, for me, the reading, I interpret it to be quite sinister. Because these people are very clearly attempting to socially engineer the marketability of their products.

This..., schema here is basically, the theme of my talk , uhmm... and it's taken from a Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad which is a tradition...sacred tradition from the Prophet Muhammad, which is not the Quran, but his oral tradition, and it says that every child is born on fitra, fitra in the Arabic language is a difficult term to translate, but one of the meanings is the inherent or aboriginal nature of the human being, that there is an inherent nature to the human being upon which they are born, and which is subsequently transformed by the society that they live in .

In other words, a child, and I want to uh, make it very clear here, that when it says the parents will make it a Jew, a Christian or Magian...this needs to be understood within the context of the Islamic uh,...vision. And I would say that the Jew, the Christian or the Magian are literally...arch-types. In other words, they are forms, ah,upon which human beings are susceptible, given the world view of the Islamic teaching.

And this is no way, meant to be offensive to people that happen to be Christian, or Jewish or even Magian. Those three traditions are actually honored in the Muslim tradition, and their churches and synagogues traditionally were protected in the Muslim lands, based on injunctions from the Quran itself and the Prophet Muhammad.

But at the same time, there's, ah... in modern society, there's a tendency to relativize religious tradition. And to create dialogue in which each religious tradition is equalized to the same level. And in a sense Islam refuses to do this, despite the fact that many Muslims are willing to engage in this practice. Islam itself refuses to do that, because Islam declares a supremacy as a teaching.

Now, I would like to point out to the Muslims, that I personally believe that these archetypes, Muslims can easily, people who consider themselves Muslims, can easily fall into these archetypal forms. In other words, there are many Muslims who are in the archetypal form of what's being termed a Jew here. And I want, I'll go into that later.

The same can be said of the Christian and the Magian. And so basically what I would like to do, is talk about this Hadith and I will get into a clarification of what these uh, arrows mean.

In terms of, of just as a start. I want to take a very brief, and this has to be recognized for what it is, it is a brief overview, of really in a sense, how we got to where we are in the United States, And in many ways, all over the world, because westernization, which, really, is a term, that is no longer appropriate, in the sense that, the this this phenomenon, which we have traditionally called westernization, it has now become a global phenomenon that does not respect traditional geographical, ah, borders and boundaries and traditional points of reference such as the east and the west. Rudyard Kipling's, famous, "The east is east, the west is west, and never the twain shall meet."

Well they have met, and it's been disastrous, and ...in many ways it's been disastrous because the, ah, west has won this stage of the battle.

And when I speak about the west, I speak about really, the worst elements of the western tradition, because there are certainly within the western tradition itself, many uh, exalted elements. And certainly many aspects of high culture. But really what I'm talking about is ah, is the, imperialistic tendencies, ah, the western hegemony, over knowledge, over thought and discourse, and ultimately over the commodification of the world itself. Ah, the, literally the desacrilization of the, of the world in which we live. And the exploitable nature, of western pursuits all over the world in terms of what, are, called, traditionally, resources, both, and I really don't like this type of terminology, but both minerals and quote unquote, "human resources".

And it's an interesting term, because again it articulates a commodification of human beings. Human beings have been reduced to resources, that are to be exploited like other, ah, resources.

If you look initially at the beginning of western civilization, in a sense it has to begin, in what is termed the Hellenistic culture, Greece.

And the Greeks have a unique ah, characteristic and that is that at a certain point, most people pinpoint around the 6th century BC or before chr...Christian Era, which is the point at which the traditional grand narrative which was ah, a in a sense a pseudo religious explanation of the world based on these gods that lived on Mount Olympus, based on the oral traditions of the gods, began to be challenged by a group of people that began what the Greeks would eventually term ...philosophy, they began to philosophize and speculate rationally about the nature of the world, where it came from, what it was made up of.

And it's very fascinating, because these people, had many different theories. Some said, everything ultimately atoms, these nonads, these irreducible components of the universe. Others said it was made out of water, others said, ...other things. And what happened because there were so many versions, ultimately a group arose out of the Greeks called the skeptics. And the skeptics were people who said that nothing can be known, because obviously human knowledge comes up with all these fanciful ideas and ultimately there's no supremacy of one over the other. Which is a really important historical point, because in a sense that is where we have arrived at again.

We are back to the skeptical perspective which is that there is no certainty. Now, from this movement arose a group of people called the sophists. And the sophists were an interesting uh, lot, who basically were extremely clever at the rhetorical manipulation of words, and and embellished words ornamentally, in a way that was designed, to influence people through speaking. And, they were really not concerned with truth. They were simply concerned with the most persuasive way of bringing people over to their idea. And it really wasn't important whether they investigated their idea, whether it was valid or not. The point, I have an opinion, I want you to have that opinion, so I'm going to convince you of that opinion. And they began to study, uhm, how to do that effectively.

And what happens from that, is a very interesting character pops up, whose name is Socrates. And Socrates basically was declared by the oracle of uhm, Delphi, that he was the most learned man in Greece, Well the Greeks wanted to know what he knew. So they went to him and asked him, 'what is it that you know?' And he said, 'that the only thing I know, is that I don't know anything.'

And uh... this was very curious to these people because here's the Oracle saying he's the most learned man in Greece, yet his knowledge is that he is ignorant.

Now, this is what the Arabs traditionally called simple ignorance.

Jahloon baseer?

And they said it was remediable, that you could cure it. Meaning, if someone knew that they were ignorant, then they could be easily cured of that sickness, by teaching them knowledge.

But the form of ignorance that they considered incurable, was compounded ignorance, and that is the type of ignorance that is where somebody thinks they know something, and in fact they don't. Well Socrates, the clever man that he was, went about basically, seeking out people who claimed to know things. And his heuristic discourse would basically reduce their arguments to ah..., to untenable arguments. Because he would basically continue to question them, and find, before long they try to sneak out the room, like Visepherous.

Or uh, others that uhm, its very fascinating what he did, but really the character is so important, as a character, because he is like the child in Hans Christian Andersen's wonderful fairytale – 'The Emperor without any clothes'.

What he did basically was just say, "The Emperor doesn't have any clothes". And because he did that, that is actually a very dangerous thing to do. They condemned him to death, because emperor's don't like to be told that they're naked, when they're doing incredible things to convince people that they're in fact ornamented in the most extraordinary clothes. Now, Socrates has this student named Plato. And from Plato emerges a theory of education, and this is really one of the first formulations, certainly in the west, of a theory of education.

And his theory of education is basically based on this idea that the human beings have 3 qualities, or three abilities. One is the ability to reason. That we can know things and we can think the good. And this is an ambiguous term, but this is basically ...the idea that the human reason is this ability to strike from the good.

And then the next one is the ability of appetite or the appetite, that we are also human and have animal qualities. So, on one hand we have the angelic aspect and on the other hand we have this... animal aspect.

And then there's this third point which is the will and the idea of the will, which is the ability for reason to solicit the use of the will in preventing the appetites from taking a person from destruction. Now this is not all so dissimilar from the akal, or the intellect. Where it would differ is that according to the Muslim belief the intellect itself is incapable of knowing the truth without divine revelation. Now Plato had an idea of direct intuition which is his highest form of knowledge. And whether by that he meant revelation, is is uhm, is just fodder for scholars.

But, in the Islamic tradition the idea that the intellect needed divine revelation. Now the reason for this is important. And that is based on this Hadith...that there is an inherent nature to the human being. But that nature must be nurtured. It must be nurtured, and it must be nurtured by divine guidance. And if it is not nurtured by divine guidance, it deviates.

Now this would be what the Christians called original sin. The move... the progressive move to the deviation the hearts swerved. And in the Islamic tradition, there is not that idea but there is a similar idea uh, that it is not based on this sin we're born into, but rather that the human being has this dual nature and there is a proclivity towards doing the animal aspects uh,... to excess,... and that must be reared in by the higher self.

Which is called the Nafs al-Luwama, and the Nafs al-Mutmaina. The Nafs al-Luwama is the blaming or reproachful self. That when it sees the Nafs al-Luwama, which is the command self, moving towards wrong, it will blame it.

Now there are two ways this is done. There is preventative or if the action is committed, then it will renew its state of purity through an act which is termed 'Taubah' in the Islamic tradition. Which is similar to the Christian idea of repentance. That one literally turns away from this this blemish, and renews ones ah, spiritual wholeness. And it's done in most religious traditions through ritualized forms. In Islam its quite simple, asking, saying "Astigfirullah" <ARABIC> and asking for the covering or the veiling of God over ones wrong action. It also entails, if there was harm done, that the harm be, be dealt with.

Now, ... ah From from, the ah..., Plato's tradition, comes a student of his, who's name is Aristotle. And Aristotle basically moves away from the metaphysical speculations of Plato, into a more ah, empiricist traditional or pragmatic tradition, his his concern was more with experiential knowledge rather than ah...intuitive knowledge. And this begins a split in western tradition that will have profound implications and is directly related to modern society, and modern education. And this is the split between the rational and the empiricist tradition.

What happens is the advent of Christianity, in Western civilization, brings a new tradition. And that is that western civilization is infused with the Semitic ideas of the the Hebrews. The Jewish tradition. But it also is synthesized with the Hellenistic ideas. So you have on the one hand, the ah, ...the the Hellenistic tradition, the pagan tradition. Which is formidable, and it can't simply be thrust aside. And you have on the other hand a a movement that actually began as a reformist messianic movement of the Jewish people, and it suddenly universalized through a brilliant polemicist, and orator named Paul, or Saul of Tarsis.

And Saul of Tarsis was from uh, an interesting town, Tarsis, which is in Asia Minor and this was the center of a Roman tradition which was known as Mithraism, and it was a basically a Babylonian mistri cult, that had been Romanized, and they believed, they believed in a God that was born on Dec 25th, he was the sole invictis or the unconquerable Sun God, who was also seen to be the Son of God. And actually died for the sins of human beings through self-immolation. In the form of a Bull. And his Blood and his Flesh were, were taken in, imbibed and eaten, as a way of redemption.

And this is all historically documented, the whole tradition of Mithraism. In fact, St. Augustine, interestingly enough, when ah, dealt with the Mithraist's, he mentions at one point that the uh,... the the the Mithraic priests had mentioned to him once, 'You know our fellow in the friggian <transcriber note: unknown word 'friggian'> cap, uh... is a Christian also'. And and a and Augustine said, the early Christians said, Mithraism was in fact, the devil's ploy at creating a kind of shadow to Christianity that would uh, be a way of trying to make Christians, disbelieve their tradition.

In other words, when they were confronted with the similarities between Christianity and Mithraism, this is how they dealt with it, as 'This is from the Devil trying to shake our faith', which is a really interesting psychological mechanism that believers uh, tend to resort to uh, when they are confronted with something quite frightening.

And uhhh...in the Quran, there's many examples of this resorting to a kind of irrational argument when Ibrahim the great iconoclast, Abraham, ah challenges his people 'what are these idols, what are these images that you are assiduously worshipping?' and and and uh, you know, ultimately when he says, 'they can't talk, they can't do anything', they they, it says literally, they returned to themselves <Quranic Verse> they returned to themselves and they realized he's got a point. And at that point its very frightening, because belief has suddenly been undermined. And what their response of these people was, is really the final refuge of the rogue in the Quran, which is, 'this is what we found our fathers doing.'

Now, human beings are really fascinating in that aspect. It's been said that rats, uhhh, will if if you have four doors and you put cheese on the fourth door, and then you open these doors, and let the rats go down. They will go down one, they'll smell the cheese, go down one,

if its say the third door, they'll keep going, they'll go down it a few times, and they'll go down maybe, number 2 door. When they finally get to the fourth door, then they eat the cheese, again cheese is put in the fourth door, and this is reinforced several times.

And so finally, when they, this funny scientist takes the cheese out and doesn't put it down the fourth door, puts it down the second door. The rat will go down the 4th door several times, but at a certain point he will stop. He'll realize that this is futile and he'll go down that second or first door and find the cheese. Now, the interesting thing about human beings, unlike the rats, is that they will tend to keep going down the fourth door. And never really go to the other door. And the reason for that is this extraordinary capacity that we uniquely hold and that is to believe.

The rat does not believe that there is cheese at the end of the... He's just interested in the cheese, because he is a creature that has a very limited uhh...brain, which is not like the human brain, a triune brain, but a singular brain that doesn't have a little uh...reptilian brain, or core brain.

Now the Christians, interestingly enough, begin to Hellenize their tradition and the Gospels originally articulated according to most of the Scholars, in the Aramaic tradition, are written in a Cornier Greek, which was the vernacular of the people at that time. And transmitted through the Greek language. In fact, the the Gospel is a Greek word, "Yaamadell" which is the good news and which uh, the gospel, which is the good news. Which is termed Ingeel in the Arabic language.

And what happens within the Christian tradition the the there is an interesting focus on Platonic thought , unlike the Aristotelian thought, and particularly neo-Platonic thought and that of a famous philosopher known as Polotinus.

And, you have a brilliant ahh..., articulator in the church known as Augustine. Who is actually from North-Africa. And Augustine, also begins to formulate ideas about education, and his basic idea is that education is to create conversion and constant repentance in the individual. Now, Augustine like many of the priestic fathers of the Christian church, uh, he really disdained the body. And the man was really in a very difficult position. He visited, by his own confession, the prostitutes of his city, as a young man. And he used to say, "Oh God, give me faith, but not yet".

In other words, he wasn't ready to give up, uhm, the the quote unquote, 'the temporal pleasures of this world'. But when he finally did in his conversion in the garden. Uh, he renounced completely the body. And he began to write things about the body. Uhhh...as has been written by Jerome and other church fathers. Really interesting aesthetics go off into the desert of Egypt and whither their bodies away. Some of them still describing their lusts, for women. Which is really unfortunate, because, as the Quran wonderfully says, <Quranic Verse in Arabic> Uh, monastacy is something that they invented <Quranic Verse in Arabic> and then they really were not even very monastic. <chuckles>

In other words, they did this thing, and then they didn't really fulfill what they were attempting to because of its very unnatural aspects...which is to deny the body itself. Because we are dual natured. We have this high angelic self, but we also have the body that cannot be ignored. And the Islamic tradition is a tradition that literally synthesizes the two, and recognizes that each has its qualities and characteristics and has its aspects that are to be enjoyed. And what the Islamic tradition does, is it simply puts uh ... boundaries on each of the two.

In fact the idea of monasticism is something the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, actually rejected. And said that there is no monasticism in my tradition.

He said, My tradition is the way of family and marriage, and whoever turns away from my tradition is not from me. And he said beware of excess in your religion. So he neither liked excess in the spiritual pursuits, nor did he like excess in the worldly pursuits, but saw that the human being should be this balanced, uh, man and woman, walking between these two aspects, taking from both, but within the generous boundaries of the Quran itself.

And so, Augustine then basically sets out an ideal, an educational ideal that becomes in many ways, the ideal of the Christian...of the European tradition, and that is the ideal of the liberal arts.

And the liberal arts were not really new they were kind of a reformulation of also the platonic, uh,... tradition and the Aristotelian tradition, and the liberal arts were that that oo, that at the elementary level there should be certain tools mastered in order to free one, from the bad habits of thought. And these were called the liberal arts. And liberal comes from the idea of freeing or freedom.

And Aristotle actually points out that the liberal arts are in contradistinction to the illiberal arts. And the idea is that the liberal arts are for the free man, and the illiberal arts are for the slave.

In other words, the slave is to learn things, in order to provide a purpose and a function to his, or her master. And not as an end unto itself, Like the free man who learns, simply, for the sake of learning, and to free his mind. So, the interesting thing about this is that, servile classes in any culture will ultimately be subjected to illiberal arts, and in many ways, in modern society, the educational system is a system which is teaching the servile classes, functional works, that they can perform, for an elite group of people. You see, this is really what modern education is about. Its not about freeing peoples minds.

And if you think it's about freeing peoples mind. You've really been enslaved. You're that character that I put up there, the first <laughing> the first picture...really...if ..if you think, that the goal of education, is to free your mind, then they've really done a number on you. And to break that is is really difficult.

Now, The liberal arts themselves are basically that you learn grammar, rhetoric, and logic, Or dialectic, and and the platonic view. These in a sense were to enable you to speak to read, and to articulate, and to understand clearly. So they were the language skills that one needed to understand what he read and to ah, write, what he understood or, his own production. And to be able to speak clearly.

Now, Augustine says about his his own self. Which in a sense is a tribute to the education that he had.

He said, and he was a teacher of rhetoric, he said he never saw anything that I couldn't read and understand. Nor that I couldn't ..uh, write. Nor that I heard and couldn't understand. Nor that I understood and couldn't articulate it.

In other words he was able to speak and to read and to write. Ahh, at a very high level. And the proof is obviously in his own, in his own works.

Now, that's called the Trivium, and then you have this Quadrivium which is learning the quantifiable sciences of mathematics, uhhh, which uh, arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy. And the interesting thing 'Masticate', in the, in the Greek tradition was actually the ancient word for education. Ah, which meant music, and really this has to do not with what we know today as music, but more rhythmic ah, oral chanting. And much of the oral tradition was transmitted like that. And I want to talk on that in a few minutes.

Now, What happens basically in Western civilization is that the the Catholic church, literally put all their eggs in the Aristotelian basket. But what happens is that Aristotle's world view becomes uh, it begins to be assaulted and attacked. And the idea of transubstantiation which is the idea of the change of the bread and the wine into the blood and the body of Christ, which was a ah medieval concept which was connected to the metaphysics of Aristotle.

Ah, its challenged, and and then you have the ascendancy of uhhh, the the learning that takes place in the scholastic tradition, after many years of what are termed the dark ages, where really all you learned were as a priest or a monk, you did not learn as a common person. Common people did not read or write it was strictly oral tradition in Europe during the dark ages.

But the scholastic tradition opens them up to Philosophy and philosophy is a dangerous door to open, as the Muslims themselves discover. And, before long you have, heretics. And these heretics begin to proliferate all over. And the Catholic church begins to attempt to control this. And before long, you have this move into what's called the Renaissance.

And this is very simplistic history but, just, the renaissance is a move from the super lunar world, which is the world above the heavens, to the sub-lunar world, which is the world below the heavens and the idea in the medieval persons mind uh, the world was a very terrible place. The body was bad, sex was bad, enjoyment was bad, all of these things were bad. Really the goal of life was to prepare for this angelic realm, which is never really described in the Christian tradition, interestingly enough. Christians really do not understand much about paradise, if you actually ask them for a description of paradise. In the Islamic tradition it is rich in its descriptions. And we certainly share the idea of a beatific vision or vision of God. But other than that, its its very, you'll get anywhere from ...you know people will think it's a Golf Course up in the sky, to it's a place where we all meet and have turkey dinners or something like that.

I mean, it's a broad range of this is what the Quran calls "Imani", or wishful thinking. Uhhh, so so the renaissance is a move. Now there is a monk from Germany who goes to Rome, and sees what's happening. And Nietze says literally uh, you know that he just can't take it, and he rushes back and the reformation begins, which is Luther who decides that the Catholic church is despicable. that they've gone just to far, and we have to make a break.

Now, Luther introduces A very interesting concept, which is state schooling. That people should be schooled by the state, and educated, and his intention for that was an indoctrination into the Protestant teaching. And this is important that it comes from Germany, Because this will again return several times in the history of schooling.

And then you have the council of Trent. The counter reformation, the Jesuits emerge to kind of deal with this, and a lot of bloodshed, and then you get just religious wars, that are terrible, and lots of people die, and people get a little tired and burnt out of the idea of religion, and you move into the enlightenment period. And It's interesting that its called the enlightenment and not like suddenly they woke up one morning and said, it's the enlightenment, we're all enlightened now, This is something you know, was called later by people, who saw it as a freeing of the human mind, from the chains of the, or the yoke of this traditionalism of the Catholic Church.

And interestingly enough, one of the key elements of the whole thing is Calvin's uhhh, fatwa, the Muslims would call it a fatwa, but a religious judgment that allows for usury. And prior to that the Catholic church condemned usury as a crime against nature.

And its interesting, that uhh...Dante and the Divine comedy, places the usurers with the Homosexuals in the same area in the, in the ring of hell, because he saw both of them as crimes against nature. One if God provided women, why should you go to men, and the other, is that God has made money so bounteous, why should you exploit people with it. And and this is similar to the Islamic understanding about why usury is prohibited because time, and the Catholics understood this, time is not a commodity that can be bought or sold. But the enlightenment brings in the idea that time is money. And this is a wretched equation, that Muslims should never be heard uttering. Time is not money. In fact the tradition that we have is 'time is God'.

So, time is reduced to a commodity, and this begins the the commodification of the world. And you have a common's movement, in in in , which was the, literally the encapsulating of commons, where peasants were no longer allowed to enjoy the common land.

So, landed gentry began to spread, uh begins to dissolve in Germany, and England and all these other places. There's really this kind of free for all because the the the Lutherans could not formulate uh canon law in the same way the Christians had, and you have Henry the 8th, doing basically whatever he wants . And taking all the monasteries in England, They were Catholic Monestaries, and he begins to loan money like interest, and you begin to see this really transformation in ideals.

Now, with the enlightenment period, you have these really important philosophers that begin to bring in these ideas on education. Certainly, I think probably, One of the most important is Locke, who begins uh, radical empiricism, in which nothing can be known other then through sensory perception that metaphysics is hogwash. That the idea of another world is all pure speculation, that we shouldn't even bother ourselves with it.

He's very clever, uh, very clever.

And interestingly enough a lot of his observations are in agreement with the traditional theologians of Islam, about the whole idea of cause and effect...that that's a whole other thing.

So uh, from from this you have educationized ideas being expounded, that really, religion is a thing for the common people. Its really not a thing for the elite. And uhhh, this this idea begins to gain increasing momentum in in western societies, and really by the 19th century you have a radical departure from the idea of religious education in you begin really intensely the secularization of education, uhhh, John Stewart mills, whose utilitarianism uh, has a serious

educational, philosophical implication whereby people are educated for the good of society. There's no idea of the other world, there's no idea, so this is what's happening in the west. There's a deep, uh, rending of their tradition, from their uh, their uh, emerging world view or perception.

Now what happens basically, and this is what in the abolition of man, CS Lewis says, 'once you reject tradition, a part of tradition. You have it so factually rejected the entire tradition. Because upon which authority do you pick and choose.' You see once you reject Christianity's one part, and this is in the Quran, <Quranic recitation>, "Do you believe in a portion of the book, and don't believe in other parts of the book?" How can you do that? Because the logical uh, this is a just a basic logical reasoning. Once a portion of a thing is undermined, the whole thing is undermined.

And this is what happens in Christianity and in modern society. Is that the education is the religious idea of education, is completely undermined.

Now the people that were unwilling to give up, were the Catholics. And that's why, just a little bit of how education came to be what it is in the United States.

In the 1830's the Catholics, uh,...because there were a lot of Catholics coming over to the US, they began to build, quite brilliant schools and they've always been great educators, mainly focusing on these liberal arts and teaching people how to think and reason and producing several, very brilliant individuals.

The Protestants and the Unitarians, in the Eastern Seaboard, began to be really worried about the effects these Catholic schools were having. And they were not run by the state, there was no subsidization. They were literally communities that wanted their children trained in the Catechism and these reading, writing, arithmetic, what were called the three R's. And these types of schools produced people like ah, Henry David Thoreau, who is famous for his "Walden's Pond" and Emerson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and uh, very brilliant writers and thinkers as well.

So, what happens is, the Massachusetts enacts an act, for public, mandatory public school. Now the interesting thing about this, this is happening in 1850, is that 80% of the population rebelled against this idea. And the final, I think Barnes Noble or there's a place on Cape Cod, it was the last village in the 1880's that literally at gunpoint, their children were taken to the public school by the militia.

So really, the Americans, because they were individualistic, did not want the state interfering in how they were to raise their children. Because they thought...as in roads into elimination of some basic freedoms, like how you raise your children. And and that should be a given, that a human being can raise their children how they see fit. And what happens is, during the 1840's, also Communism, and the spread of specter of communism, Karl Marx, there is a specter haunting Europe, which is communism, and there capitalist interests in this country were also worried about that, and they saw public school as a way to raise good Republicans. And so they also wanted state indoctrination. Now the interesting thing, they go to Germany for a model, because Germany was really already manifesting Fascistic tendencies at that time. The Prussian schools were based on rigid authoritarianism, and punitive measures, that were really in

retrospect, barbaric to the children. And , uhmm, this indoctrination, the Nazi's in in way are a direct result of child rearing techniques that were being used in the 1880's, inGermany .

Ahh...you know, Adolf Hitler and all these people, imagine how they were raised. We know that Saddam Hussein uh, who's uncle Hassan al-Qattab, Hassan the liar, apparently used to beat him every day with a metal pipe.

Now, that in no way, absolves him of his crimes against humanity, but it certainly is an interesting thing to note, in terms of, the type of child rearing produces, the type of individual he is, if we can call him an individual, because individuality implies consciousness.

Now, the uh, ... the the idea of public education then, spreads thought the US. Really public education is for the masses, it is not for the elite. Because the elite continue to be educated in elite schools.

The interesting thing, Elite, the word itself, comes out of a word, that we get, also, literacy derives from it.

And so the idea is, really, in the end of the day. Literate people are still the Elite. So schooling, public schooling was not designed to create truly literate people. It is an illiberal education designed to create functionally literate people, because service to society. This is particularly important with the onset of Industrialization. Because once industrialization begins, you need people that are slaborers, that can learn, not as an apprentice who learns over several years a trade. But learn how to work machines, and learn how to function in the factory.

And, so, this begins the dissent really, serious descent really, a serious descent of modern education, into the arena of creating these functionally literate people in the State of NY, Garbage Collectors need 12 years of education, in order to get the job, which enables them to pick up and take garbage from homes.

Now this is in no way belittling garbage collectors, if there are any garbage collectors here, because Islam actually honors labor.

And The Prophet Muhammad said (PBUH), the best food that a man can eat, is from the labor of his own hands. And the Prophet David used to eat from the labor of his own hands. So labor is honored in Islam, what is called "Halal Work", or work that is in the realms of permissibility, Now, to look at this this thing here. You basically have in the Islamic tradition, a child is born in the fitra state. This is what these arrows indicate there is a natural growth which is healthy, which will grow into a child, aware of its origin, which is back to the divine creator, and its purpose in life, which is an ethical, both ethical , ethical moral dimensions as well as spiritual dimensions. The moral ethical dimensions are known as Islam, and the spiritual dimensions are known as iman and ihsan.

Now, what happens here basically, is in the ideal situation, you have the family that is nurturing the child in its own fitra state. And the society as well. And this is the ideal situation, and this will create a healthy individual who is according to the Prophet Muhammad, PBUH, is somebody who is safe to the society, in terms of his hand, and his tongue. In other words, a Muslim is one who is neither a threat with his hand or his tongue. That is the Muslim.

Now the Mumin, the believer, is the one who people are safe from him, you see. So basically the idea is to create an ethical, moral spiritual being, that is multi dimensional and really has a direction that is positive and healthy.

Now the next state is, which is what I think people in this room might find themselves in, to a certain extent. Is when, their child is in a fitra state, their trying to nurture that fitra state, but the society is against that state.

So, the Society is literally counterproductive to the work you're trying to do. And this creates confusion, in a child's mind, because on one hand in the house...and this is one of the greatest tragedy's of modern education, not just for Muslims, but for Christian parents, for uhm, Jewish parents, for anybody of any tradition, in which they would like to see their child, basically in a you know, a believing individual, that this is, is very difficult situation, because, uhh, the child is in a type of schizophrenic environment, in which the house has one way of doing something, and outside the house, has another.

Then the next stage, is where the parents, might be in a society that is in this healthy state, but the parents are against this this state. And this is another form of confusion, which is more severe then the first the second form there.

Now the final one, is really now, where we are today, in the United States and most of the world. And that is where the child comes into a world in which not only the parents are detrimental to its wholesome growth, but the society itself . So school becomes as John Taylor Gatto said, a place in which really bad habits are learned.

And, its interesting that the ancient Greeks considered ethics really good habits morals and ethics were good habits.

So this is basically where many people find themselves in. Now..., the results of this ...I think, ...is is, I think, is great deal this. And that is, which is that the fastest growing segment of the criminal population, is are children, juveniles. Growing at an incredible rate. We're talking about very serious crimes. Not like the 1940's where we were talking about stealing some gum from the store. Now, we're talking about armed robbery, murder, many children at early ages are exposed to, especially in the inner cities, where its very..uh,, horrific.

And the worst part about it is, is, again, this display of the society, we have a society where by the ruling elite is involved, quite literally involved, in the importation of drugs, into our communities. And this is not conspirital theory, this is 60 minutes. This is stuff you can watch on television. That we have people at the highest levels in in Governmental institutions, have been involved in bringing in during the Vietnam, heroin was the drug of choice because, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia were fertile areas for Heroine.

During the 1980's when the wars were basically in central America, and south America, Cocaine becomes the drug of choice because that's were a lot of the covert operations were taking place. And these covert operations were funded by serious drug money that is derived out of the local communities.

Now what I find it very interesting that what our culture has done is, culture is done, is basically, Karl Marx declared religion to be the opiate of the masses, so the culture got rid of this opiate, and replaced it with real opium.

You see. Which is...which is, really, very interesting.

Because religion has limited commercial...ha-ha...only the church can make money from religion, right? But anybody can make money out of drugs. If they're foul and vile enough.

Now, just to get into... just to get into a little bit of the Pharonic educational system, which is the idea, of what's called higher education. Right, And you find that people, might many people enter into the first, second third, fourth, fifth grade. It begins to diminish as the grades go up, I mean, this is all over, in all cultures. Many people in ah, in Muslim countries will never get past 3rd or 4th grade, which is probably a good thing for them. They don't really realize it, but I think, actually, its probably a blessing in disguise. Because the higher up you go, the more indoctrinated you get. You see, And then you get into the arcane secrets of the temple. When you get to the top.

Things like there is no God, and uh...this is what you'll learn in in the university, higher education, that that uhm religion are basically methodological traditions, allegories, to be studied and looked at, as interesting milestones in the history of human civilization.

And, now up at the top, I think it's a whole separate little pyramid unto themselves. Which is the ruling priesthood, who are called PhD's, and Masters Degrees people. And I'm not talking about people with master's degree from The University of California of like San Jose state or or you know, Irvine or whatever. I'm talking about Harvard, uhhh, Stanford, where wherethe ruling elite and their think tanks are supplied by disembodied brains from these institutions. That will do things like, create the best way to kill Arabs, and leave the oilfields intact. You see, these types of people that have studied sometimes 20 years, 25 years, in order to develop Bombs, that will kill human beings, but leave the buildings and structures intact so that their their the the Satanic forces of which they are minions to, can move in and do their further exploitation.

So, we have this really interesting situation and really it should be remembered that people like Henry Kissinger, who is a mass murderer, and quite literally, a massed murderer, is given the Nobel Peace Prize, you see, and has honorary PhD's from several universities. So the more evil you are the more honored you are in this tradition.

And really, the more innocent you are, the more impossible it is for you to continue on.

And I would use Bilal Hide, my friend who is at Berkeley, is a good example of that. He's somebody who after several years trying to get his PhD, and realizing that he was losing his soul, chose to keep his soul, and give up the PhD, and that is the unfortunate experience of several people. And I have personally uhm,, many people that are in PhD programs, that have come to me for counseling because they are so distraught about their human condition. And I'm not joking. That's a very real statement.

So, this is really what this society produces at its highest levels. People that are, are literally in a tragic uhm. Now, what I would like to is quickly, because I realize that I've been going on a

long time. And, This should actually be a two part lecture , I might end up doing that, Because there is a lot of areas that I didn't cover, that I wanted to cover. But I've been going on for quite some time.

So, what I would like to do is just mention a few things of which I think are absolutely disastrous, in terms of the children, and what's happening to our children.

The first thing, Is the whole grading system, that, you're in first, second, third, fourth, fifth grade. The idea that you put children into a class with their peers. Of which they do not experience the richness and the diversity of age. And this is something I can only attest to. Because I was in a traditional Islamic School, where the oldest student was well into his 60's, and the youngest student was 5 years old.

And that was in one school, and the 60, the one who was in his 60's, was memorizing the Quran at the time, and had memorized half the Quran after the age of 60, with my teacher, who not only taught him, but also taught the 5 year olds, the 6 year olds that were memorizing the Quran. And he lived in in the student dormitory, which was basically a, a, hut made out of burlap sacks, sacks, uhmm... he lived with a few students who were In their teens.

Now this, historically in America, the schools that produced the richest and most intelligent people that this society has produced, came out of schools, often time, that had, several different ages, they were one room classrooms where they had, anywhere from 6 to 15 years of age. And they were learning individually, and this really is an organic ah, way of teaching children, and allows for not only the richness of experience. But it also breaks down part of the bullying effect that takes place. Where one grade bullies the grade lower then them.

It's like the, in the Patani system, where each tribe complains about the tribe upstream that dumps all their gar...rubbish into the stream, right, so as the stream flows down, the tribe gets the the the waste of the tribe upstream. And this is what happens in this system.

That that I think is really sad. And this is a completely arbitrary, it is not from any traditional system of education. Neither in the Islamic world, nor the European world. This is something that is part of the modern system.

The Next thing that I think is absolutely disgusting, is the neurotic way in which people are qualified through numbers. You are an A student, which means that you are anywhere from 90 to a 100. And you are a B student which is 80-100, and this is again arbitrary, because some schools its 84 to 94 is a B student.

So – in one school you may be a B student, in another school you are a C student. So much for objective quantification of where you're at.

Now what this does, first of all it attaches valence, products, you see the child is reduced to a commodity, of which they are literally given a numerical value. In the same way that we give numerical value to products in stores. And so a child who might be working to its full capacity and potential and yet is determined a C, or an average student, one of the things this does not allow for, what the Muslims believe is part of education, which is literally a divine opening, that happens during education. Because ultimately, Muslims believe, that the true teacher, is God himself, that that is where we learn from, that that is our source of knowledge. <QURAN> that

God taught man. And so this is really does not allow them. So you find that children are pigeon holed, and they'll really see themselves as average students.

Now its really interesting, as Neil Postman points out, if you go to a Doctor, he will also give you grade. Like, He'll say for instance, 'well, you're doing ok'. Which that basically, he gave you a C...right?

And then he, said, 'You're actually doing pretty well'. Now he's given you a B. Or he'll say, 'You are really doing fantastic, in fact, you're 40 years old, but you've got the heart of a 20 year old.' So he's given you an A plus.

Now, if he gives you a B or a C, you're not going to give him his money. You're going to say, 'how do I get better', ...right? 'How do I improve?'

Well they never tell you that, when they give you these letter grades...right. Work, try harder, right. Not working up to his potential. Things like that. So the child is literally reduced, I mean, its really horrific what happens to the children in grading. And grades are literally a 17th century product of Cambridge, in England.

Prior to that, the greatest intellects of both the western and Islamic tradition, and Chinese tradition were not graded. Shakespeare did not get grades in school...right.

And like, Einstein, right...someone wrote an article that said, had Shakespeare gone into English departments in this country, he probably would have flunked out, Right.

In the same way that Einstein flunked out some basic math courses. So because genius is not desired in this culture, believe you me, they don't want intelligent people. They want functionally literate people. they don't want, if you think to much, you're literally, the educational system is designed to put that out. And This is the saddest thing of all, because a child, literally from its early ages is this bursting, with this...divine impulse, to know one thing, ...'why?'

That's what the child wants to know, that's what they want to know...“WHY”. And That's why, if you have children, you know this is true, they will continuasly ask why, not “How”. Which is what they teach you in this culture, “HOW”.

But they want to know 'why'.

“Why is it like that”. That's what my son, “Why, But Why?” . Now where does that come from? Who gave him that question. Why doesn't he ask, “How doesn't that work”...Right?

He wants to know 'Why?'

“Why aren't you coming home tonight.”

“Why can't I have that toy.” ...Right.

But the point is that, why, is literally, that is the great question, that ultimately, if it is nourished and nurtured, the great resounding answer that comes back is, 'Allah'... You see.

That is the great resounding answer that comes back. 'Why'. That is the 'Why' to every question.

Which does not mean we simplistically tell the child, you know, 'Why is the sky blue', 'Because God made it so'. Which is a perfectly valid answer.

And the child actually will accept that answer, interestingly enough. And Children are, designed to believe. They believe.

They're incredibly gullible. They're believers. By their nature. You tell them anything, they'll believe you. Just try it on a 4 year old, they'll believe you. And and, what what's what's done to them in our school system, is they lose the desire for knowledge. They go in bursting with this desire to know, and after 12 years of that nonsense, they don't want to see another book. And if they do, they want to see another book for only one reason, ECONOMIC GAIN.

Lively hood.

They go to school to earn a livelihood. To be...to become servants, in a culture of slaves and serfs. So – the the idea of grading, which should really be completely thrown out, and uh, and people say, 'how do you stimulate the children.'

Well, I lived in a, in a place, in west Africa, and Muhammad Shareef is going to talk about this. I lived in a place, where children were literally competing with each other in the most beautiful ways, to outdo the next one. And children, don't need grades to know where they're at. You see. You don't need to tell a child that you're doing well, or you're not doing well...right?

A child knows where they're at. They do. They know if they're pathetic, they know if they're lazy. They know if their working hard, they know if they don't understand something, they know if they do understand something.

Now – the next thing, which is the Bill Gates nightmare, and that is this whole , the the, uh, the technolization of our school systems, in other words, a computer in every classroom. Which really, probably that is going to be the last straw. I mean that's the the straw that will break the uneducationable Childs back. And what's interesting to note, is that what computers are, they're really, they're, machines that are brilliantly designed to inculcate the idea of totalitarianism.

You see, because if you work on any word processing program, you learn quite quickly the limitations of the program.

In other words, you have to submit to the constraints of the program itself, and the logic of the program.

There's no creative room for you, its very limited. And the other thing, computer games, coupled with these Nintendo type games, that they are literally designed to, and people think its good for their reactions. Actually children, the worst thing they need to do, is become these kind of neurotic, uhm, hyperactive, reactive children. In fact what they need to be taught is deliberation. That's actually one of the lessons that children need to learn, how to sit down, and

reason something out quietly. They don't need this quick you know, and most of its all about killing.

If you look at these toys, its all killing people, that's what their doing, and the one that kills the most, wins the game.

I mean who designed these things?

You know, really sick sick people with PhD's and stuff like this. From the same people that gave you the Vietnam war. It's the same type of of intellect, so really this is what's happened, you know, and computers, and the other thing about it is, Is that, one of the things that we failed to recognize, is that children, are literally, they already have an agenda, and it's a divine agenda.

If you look at this, the Brain is seen as, its its called a triune brain. And this is really interesting, because the ancients worked this out as well.

Augustine saw that human being was divided into thought, feelings and will. And Aristotle saw it as knowledge, feeling, and will, also. And this this, our brains are literally ah, they have 3 aspects, the action or reptilian system, that is the system that is developed by Nintendo Games.

The reptilian brain, and interestingly enough, its shared by lizards and rats, and snakes and rodents. So when children start becoming, quote unquote 'pests', in society, we should really wonder, if we've over developed their reptilian brains, to the neglect of their higher brains. Right?

Now, the feeling brain, which is the mid brain, is the brain that deals with emotion. And this is the brain, that is literally nurtured by the alma-mater, the mother. Right, this is a gift that a mother gives her child in the first seven years. And if you look here, the R-System is developing between the ages of 1 to 7, the limbic system , through the ages 1-7, and that point, literally it stops.

So basically, our children, during the first seven years, these are the years that literally, these two brains, are really, all the neurological connections are being created, and the brain is a remarkable thing, in that...Massive damage can occur at this point, through accidents and trauma, and probably through the use of Computers and television, because these are new technologies, and very little is known about them, but we can see a very serious decline in society through statistics and other means.

Since the introduction of Television into the culture, and certainly since the introduction of computers now, and these games. And its only getting worse.

And so, now this is the tradition, from the Islamic tradition, that says <QURAN> which is, play with your children for seven years. Now all cognitive theory has basically confirmed the wisdom of that approach.

Children are literally emerged in the subconscious realm during the first 7 years. They are not in the they're not in the same world we're in. They're in a beautiful world. It's a beautiful world, and that world needs to be nurtured through play. Play is the work, like Pieage the Swiss

psychology said, That play is the work of the infant. That is their work. They are meant to be doing all that wonderful work.

Now, putting a child in front of a TV, destroys that activity. It puts them into a passive receptive mode. Which is exactly what this culture wants to be in.

Because they want to fill you head with all those name brands. And if you're in passive – receptive mode, they can be anchored very well. This is why the Ford Foundation in 1957 wrote a policy paper, which was a demand that television be introduced into education in a very big way. And they attacked any criticism of this idea, despite the fact that television was incredibly novel technology at that time.

So, what I want to do is quickly, read a few things from this book, which I really recommend everybody read, it's called 'Evolutions end' by Joseph Chilton Pierce, it has something's that you can take or leave. But his argument is really extraordinary in it. He says, "All the infant child, and the adult as well, want to do is what nature intended." Now they call God – Nature, which is just semantics here. "Learn, build those structures of knowledge. And all that is needed for this is an appropriate environment. Being surrounded by a mature, intelligent, intellect, open to minds, possibilities and tempered by hearts wisdom, recognizing that to the human all may be possible, but always asking, is it appropriate. "

Beautiful.

And this, there's an Islamic tradition in Bayhaqi, that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said that, (PBUH), that Adam asked God, to give him 'Isma', which is infallibility. And God told, him , that he only gave that to his angels. In other words, his offspring would have it.

So then, God, promised him that he would give his offspring the ability to do all things, with the exception of putting off death.

And the so the human, potential, is really unlimited. But the question, is it appropriate. But, "Is it appropriate", can only be answered by a human being that has been nurtured and educated in a way in which the moral, ethical, and spiritual being of that person has been enhanced, and not stunted.

<Quran>

"He has had success, the one who has purified his soul, and he is destroyed, the one who has polluted his soul."

Now,.. I think, people probably need a break at this time. I really, ... I just didn't get to where I wanted to get , uhmm, But I know most of you, so we can talk about it. Other times.

Uhmm, yeah, I think, we need to take a break. We're going to take a break, Why don't we make it, we'll start at Quarter after 8, so please be back in the auditorium quarter after 8, for, Muhammad Sharif's talk.

The final thing I will say, is simply, to sum all of this up. I think that it is absolutely imperative for us as individuals to recognize that the state has failed, in providing a narrative, for our children to be taught within the context of.

And because they don't have a narrative, of which we do, and our narrative, I'm talking about the Muslim narrative, not the only vibrant, it is unchallenged, it is unchallenged, despite the fact that most other narratives have fallen by the wayside, Islam is as vibrant now, in terms of its its universal message, as it was when it was first articulated by our blessed Prophet. And what I will say, is that interestingly enough arrived yesterday in the mail, which was a letter from the superintendent of Santa Clara school district.

And I was wondering if he was sending me a message, that, not to talk bad about him or something. What I will say, he says here that the "world our students will grow up in will be entirely different from the world we knew. Change occurs at such a rapid rate, that we can no longer avoid the impacts it is having on our schools. The amount of info available doubles every 2years . How are we going to teach our children to cope with all this information, and acquire the skills required to process it."

What a ridiculous statement. I mean, 'teach to process?' That's what they are, data processors..Isn't that what computers were invented to do, to process data?

Is that really what we want human beings to be doing, processing data? To become consumers of knowledge, as if it was a commodity, and then to go out and market yourself, which is what one of the things they teach you in school , how to market yourself.

And so, the one thing I wanted to end with was, I really believe that in a sense, we are like a the western civilization built an extraordinary jet plane, and literally got everyone on it. And Unfortunately, they got a lot of people from the Muslim countries as well. And it took off and it's flying at 35000 feet, and suddenly its lost power, and its literally, its its just descending at an incredibly rapid rate. And the frightening thing about it is the stewardesses are still asking, "Coffee, Tea, or a beverage". You know.

I mean, people are just going on as if we're not in a disastrous condition. And we are, we are in a frightening condition, and I really think that the Muslims, we have an extraordinary competition to play in the revival, of really what education is meant to be, which is to illuminate and to liberate.

And the gift of Islam to education what has been termed the democratization of knowledge. That it offered knowledge not to the ruling elite, but knowledge is the property of everyone, in particular the poor. And the vast majority of scholars of Islam were from, the working class. And often times, freed-slaves. <Quran> Thank you very much.

Muhammad Sharif>

Alhamdullilah, we're going to have a small break, but I would like to say from the onset. I made a mistake, we will hold back all questions until after both lectures have completed. But we will ask Sidi Hamza to come back after the break, and finish up, what he thinks he has to finish up. Because I think he needs to finish this. Thank you very much Asalamualaikum.

Sheikh Hamza (0:00:00)>

<Dua in Arabic>

Inshallah, I've been...asked just to finish up a few things, I'm going to speak first short time and try to come to some conclusions about, a lot of what I was talking about. And I would like to do

that, by doing one thing, quickly looking, in a sense, at what the Islamic ideals, of an educated individual, and how that comes about.

And then, Muhammad Shareef is going to talk really, about the practicum, of an Islamic education that was used for several centuries, in the Sahara and in the last several century, and up to today, in Northern Nigeria.

Just, in conclusion, about Western, about Western Civilization, I would like to quote, ...from a man,... Paul Appleyard, who wrote a book ...about Science. And, although, I think it's important for us...not to simply demonize science, because science is ...honored in Islam. But what I would say about that, is that every culture will create a science, that in a sense is unique to that culture. Based on its own...religious beliefs, and its presumptions brings to science itself. So, science is not disembodied logic, and that really is an idea, that has been thrown out by ...uhm, by most 20th century thinkers.

Basically, what Appleyard, who is a science writer, for the ...I think the Time's in London, says, that 'Science seems unable to co-exist with alternative explanations of belief systems.' In other words, Modern science will tend to really laugh and ridicule the belief systems of..., say, religious traditions. Now there are many Muslims that, have attempted to prove the validity of the Quran through Scientific justification, and there's some some inherent dangers with that, in that, you are attempting to prove something that is certain, with something that, by its very nature, is subjective and limited.

In other words, Science itself, in the Islamic tradition, is considered a Dhani knowledge, it is not a knowledge that is based on revelation. And therefore is susceptible to mistakes and problems. And what happens in Western Civilization, is although the dominant model is dominant, it is rarely pointed out by those teaching it, that it is the dominant model.

And as is the nature of scientific revolutions, it will be supplanted by a model that comes along, that is a more convincing way of describing things. So he says, that basically that it is incompatible. And this is not just true when its being exported from one nation to another. But also when it competes with other systems within a single nation. The science based liberal democracy is therefore tend towards a unity of unbelief.

Really interesting, because this is a Non-Muslim writing this. And if you put that into Arabic, you would say, "<Arabic>", the unity of unbelief, and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was noted as saying, <Arabic> - that Kufr is one system, in other words, unbelief is one system. So it is quite natural that its historical imperative would be to unify, in its unbelief.

You see, really quite extraordinary.

Now – he says here, that, “science is perfectly capable of marginalizing believers, without actually stripping them, of their un...of their belief.” So it can marginalize what Carter called, “God as a hobby syndrome”. It marginalizes religion, which is a really good way of putting it, because as Kierkegaard (sp) – one of the first philosophers to deal with Nihilism, and the problem of modern society, pointed out, that the most, the most insidious aspect of modern nihilism is a leveling in which qualitative distinctions are weakened by a knowing reflection, and in other words, that it leaves, the modern nihilism, leaves everything standing, but cunningly empties it of significance.

So the church is remaining, its standing as an institution, but it has no meaning in modern society. And this is something that , unfortunately, post colonial Muslim governments have used

the same strategies, for attempting to leave the mosques standing, but cunningly, deprived of its meaning within the culture.

And Islam is not amenable to this type of, really its not. By the very nature of the mosque, unlike the church, by the very nature of the mosque and the recitation of Quran and the act of worship, there is a renewal that will occur, by that very nature. And it has to reach a critical mass, then it becomes actually extremely dangerous for whatever the dominant Pharaoh of the time, happens to be.

Now in terms of just Islam. Basically, what Islam is attempting to do, is to create a felicitous state in the human being, and this is called in Arabic, "Saada", in other words, Islam is a means, whereby a human being enters into a "Saada" in this world, which prepares him for a "Saada" in the next world. So the idea, of of this happiness, or to be "Saeed", is literally to submit to the moral constraints of Islam, outwardly, and be enriched, by the spiritual nourishment that comes through, not only ritualized practice. But practice that literally is designed, and according to our belief, by the creator himself, is designed to awaken, ones own internal experience. So that the world, is not simply reduced to, external experiences, but actually there is an internal world, as well. So the human being has a "Dhahir" and a "Batin" . Is not simply reduced to a dhahir person. But also has a Bhatiny.

Now – there is inherent dangers of both, the dhairy danger is to be immersed in this outward formalization of knowledge and ritual. And not to be nourished inwardly. There is also an Bhatiny danger. Which is to begin to reject the outward formalities and ritualizations. And to thrive on some inward experiences. And these are often seen in the dichotomies of the dry and ritualistic fuqahah, and the ecstatic and extreme suffiyah, or Ghoolat as-Suffiyah. Not the, the moderates of both, Is what Imam Shafi, the great Muslim jurispudent as well as a extremely interior man said, uhm..., "You should be a faqih", in his diwan, he said that you "should be a faqih and a Sufi, but don't be just one of them". In other words, you should have an outward life, which is based on knowledge, but you should also have an inward life, which is based on the experience, or the tasting, the fruits of your actions. So that the actions aren't barren, because of impure intentions and what not.

And, so, this, there's two types of Saada: Duniyawiya, or Okhrawiya. Which is worldly and otherworldly. And from the Islamic tradition, basically, there's what's called Nifaq, which is a covenant that is taken, and its man's recognition and acknowledgement of God as his absolute Lord. And what education should do really, is engender in the human being, the realization of that nifaq, and its importance. So that by the time the child emerges into puberty, it is ready to take on what is known as Takleef, or the amana of responsibility, the trust of responsibility, and that it can fulfill that trust.

And...the, in terms of just the relationship of happiness to itself, there's...Islam teaches us, that really, the Heart, or the seat of knowledge itself, is a spiritual substance, in the human being, which is referred to in the Quran as Qalb, Nafs, Akhal, & Rhuua, Its all these terms, Qalb, literally means heart. Fuad, is another aspect. Nafs is the self. Aaklh which is the intellect, and Rhuua, which is the spirit. Now – it has different names because of different accidental modes. In other words , because of the different modes. So, when the the mode of the self is

engaged in bodily actions, like eating, the desire to eat; Then we move into the realm of Nafs. Which is part of our nature. When it's involved in intellection and apprehension, understanding, things like this. Then it moves into the realm of the Akhal itself. Then when it is engaged in receiving intuitive illumination, which is called Ilham, and spiritual insight, this is called the Qalb, or the Ruhua also.

So, ...these these are the different, ...now the development of these in the human beings, is, as I mentioned in the beginning of this talk, is based on three different stages. The first is Nafs ul-Luwama, the next is Nafs ul-Amara, which is the commanding self, The next is the Nafs ul-Luwama, which is the reproaching self, and the last is Nafs ul-Mootmaina.

Nafs ul Amara is literally when the human being is reduced to his animal nature. And this human being is unfit to be a calipha, or a vice-regent on the Earth. It is impossible for this individual to fulfill their divine function, which is literally to be a steward of the Earth. And so they are reduced to their lowest nature <Arabic> the lowest of the low, and they literally, this is the path of what's known as "Shahawat".

The human being is not only encouraged to eat and drink, but eating and drinking of the good things of the Earth, but not to excess, and this Is the key that the Quran puts, this limit.

So the horizontal freedoms are curtailed, as Abdul Haq Godless, likes to refer to them, the horizontal freedoms of Islam are curtailed in order that the vertical freedom can be limitless. In other words, the person limits, where they spread out on the Earth, in order for their energy's to be directed upwards to a spiraling upward motion. And so, the Shahawat , are honored in Islam, and they are actually sacrilized or turned into, commands in the Quran, <Arabic> , 'Eat and Drink' is a command in the Quran from God. And so, we say, "Bismillah" when we eat, and this is literally the ah, turning these mundane simple acts actually into acts of worship. And the same, The Prophet Muhammad <saws> said that a Man who goes to his wife, there is a reward in that. And the companions were amazed, and said, "You mean, going to our wives, and taking our Shahwat that we get a reward? And he said, don't you see that if you go to the Haraam, you get a punishment, and likewise if you go to the halal, because out of this Taqwa of God, or this conscious awareness of God, then it is turned in again into a sacred act. So, this is the sacrilization of the World, from the Islamic... And so the Nafs-ul Amara must be curtailed, and the first mechanism for that is the Luwama, the Loum, which is the self, which literally attacks ...and reproaches this negative, and it does it through Taubah and and spiritual exercises, and prayer is certainly and night prayers, and these things...

And finally, Nafs-ul Mootmaina, when the self has, ...is no longer is bound by the Amara, it is literally been freed of the commanding self. And now is in a state of <Arabic>, and the way to achieve that is, according to the Quran, through the dhikr of Allah Subhanawatallah. It is through the conscious remembrance of God, so that when one literally is remembering God, in the highest way, then one conquers the lower self. And Then the lower self becomes a beast that the human being can ride and is not ridden by it. And this human being is worthy of being the Calipha, or the vice regent of God. Because that human being has conquered the self. Which is now a vehicle, and no longer controlling them.

Now, the way in which, and I think this is really, this book, which is called “A is for Ox”, a brilliant, some brilliant insights, which I think are applicable to Islam. And that, ... Because he sees, he views the crisis as a... separation from oral tradition, and literate tradition.

And Because there is no more an oral tradition in this culture, due to television and electronic media, children are no longer really capable of being truly literate, which he believes is creating a conscious, in other words that literacy is one way in which conscious emerges from the human self

Now, Islam is, one of the most fascinating things about Islam, is that it introduces a book into an oral culture. So, that the Quran is literally a bridge between orality and literacy, in fact, it took an oral people to becoming the most literate human beings that have ever existed on the face of the Earth; by the testimony of not just the Muslims, but by the testimony of the Non-Muslims. And you can read the “Age of Faith” by Will Durant, in which he talks about the the really peerless civilization of books and knowledge, that was created during what is usually termed by orientalists, as the Golden Age of Islam.

So, the Quran and the Hadith tradition, have uniquely bound us to the oral tradition. In other words the Quran is learned orally, before it is learned literally. And it is a reading before it is a book. It is a Quran before it is Kitab. You see, which is a book.

So the oral tradition, of Islam, is honored and nurtured. Now, one of the things that is important in every culture, is the act of storytelling, “Riwaya” in Arabic. A Riwaya in Arabic, literally means to quench the thirst . It comes from, If you look at the root word, it comes from a word to “Quench the thirst”. And a story, we are in need of stories. We are in need of narratives, as human being we are in need of narratives. And the Quran, is a narrative, <Arabic>, it’s literally telling us a story, there are Qasas in the Quran. So human beings need stories in which meanings literally emerge, and so really, this is one of the main functions of education, is to present the divine narratives, in which all other narratives are literally, put to the test by.

In other words, the Quran is the touchstone of reality for all narratives. If the narratives do not harmonize with the Quran, then they’re invalid. And this is why the Quran is “Mohamin”, it is an overseer of all the previous narratives.

So, the Narratives of the Greeks, the narratives of the Jews, the narratives of the Christians, of the Magians, of the Buddhists, of the Hindu’s, all of the narratives must be placed before the authority of the Quran itself. And this is the Islamic worldview, and from that, wisdom can be derived, and this is what the Prophet Muhammad (sallalahualayhiwasalam) said, “Wisdom is the lost beast of the Mumin, wherever he finds it, he is more worthy of it.”

And so, we’re inculcating the Quranic world view into children. And this is why from the age of about 6, late 6, which is...and really educating children prior to that is...criminal. In a sense, because they are, really not intellectually ready for that. And they can learn to read and write, you can teach children, 3, 4, some children learn even earlier then that. But, it is depriving them of that right of “Luab”, of “play”. And this is what needs to be nourished, during that time.

And children that are taught before that age, you can see a qualitative difference in their being and behavior. They don't look as healthy, as other children. They're often times, not as bright as other children. Just In terms of bright, I don't mean intellectually. I mean bright in a spiritual sense. You know that children radiate this brightness and when they don't radiate it, it means something's putting it out.

And So, the, traditionally in the Muslim world, children literally memorized the Quran. And this is, I personally believe, the effect that this will have on the developing brain, is something phenomenal.

And my own experience with people who memorize the Quran in their youth, is that, although often I've met many, that are like tape recorders in the sense, that they don't know what the book means, and they might not have reflected on it a lot. But they just, they've got it there. But the people that have, who went on to develop their intellects, are just the most phenomenal intellects that I've personally ever met. And I... And I think that's a testimony to the power that the Quran literally presents, to the one who has internalized it, and become a "Hamil", a barri... a bearer of the Book of Allah, "Subhanawatallah."

And so, the, ...from that, from the basis of this Quran, this divine narrative, then a child emerges into the world of abstraction. Which is where the narrative begins to emerge as a understandable, element in their lives. And the interiorization of the ethics of the Quran, of the spirituality of the Quran, and what the Quran is actually calling to. And the Quran says, <Arabic from Quran >, "This Quran guides to what is upright, and it gives good news to those who believe in it, who do right actions, that they will have a great reward." And their reward, is not simply in the next world, but also in this world, in terms of realizing of Quranic civilization. Which is a high ideal, and has been realized more then once in human history. And if people are severed from the Quran, then they enter the crookedness of other narrations.

And the Quran reminds us, that it is a book without crookedness. There is no crookedness in it, and thus, what emerges from it, is the "*istiqama*", or the uprightness, or the straightness of any society that takes it on, has the grand narrative of the society, and what has been lost in the West, is what they call the "Grand Narrative". What they call, quote unquote, idols, have fallen by the way side, and they're left in this freefall, of nihilistic tendencies, and banished to cyberspace. Where they, will roam down the information superhighway, going, really to what, Stephen J Gould called, an eloquent dance to nowhere, and it's not even eloquent really, it's just a kind of pathetic, aping, of the worst human characteristics and tendencies.

So, with that, I'm going to ask Muhammad Sharif, and I would just like to say, that Muhammad Sharif and I, have a reasonably long history, in terms of our Islamic experience, we become Muslims at the same times. He went to what's called the "Bilad us-Sudan", which means, the "Land of the Blacks", in Arabic, and I went to "Bilad un-Naydaan", which means the "Land of the Whites" in Arabic which I was in West Africa, and he was in East Africa. And, Not, you know, that's just coincidental, I mean I didn't go there, because it was Bilad un-Naydaan. That's just what it happened to be.

And we studied, in similar types of institutes, with very similar texts and things like that. And we, what we did, was both of us, we had a taste, and it was a short but extremely intense and sweet taste, of really what the Islamic madrassa is like, and the type of people it produces.

Now, having said all that, I have to admit, there are very great shortcomings in it, and and, there are reasons for the historical stagnation of the Islamic intellectual tradition, but the fact is that in many ways, there are very vibrant and dynamic elements of it that still exist in the Sahara, and the sub-Saharan, and I think that's what he's going to talk about, so, I would just like to ask him, and thank you very much.

Muhammad Shareef (0:23:34)>

Takbir! Takbir! Takbir!

<Arabic>

I'll briefly try to make a gloss over what Sidi Hamza Yusuf ...

Moderator (1:02:12)>

Takbir!

Inshallah, this is now, time for questions, we're going to entertain questions from the audience, we're now asking Br Yusuf to collect questions, and then we will filter them out and...

Sheikh Hamza (1:02:50)>

<Basmallah>

<**Question**>I can feel conflict, in what you're saying here, are we, not to seek the best education? How about <Arabic>

What of... <> seek knowledge, even onto China? One of the miserable Elite from Stanford.

<**Answer**>Seek knowledge, even in China, which Ibn Abu Burr <Arabic> Hafiz of Maghrib, mentions in his Book, "Jami ul-Ilm whar Bayaan", is...a...hadith that basically...the meaning is true, even if the Isnad has some Nazar in it. But the meaning is true, seek knowledge even onto China.

But, like I was saying earlier, is that, every every system of education will have a world view that goes with it, and unfortunately, the Western system of education will not produce the individual that, Muhammad Shareef was describing, in his talk.

And My proof is, in the society that these higher systems of education have created. This does not mean that there's no benefit in the University systems, there's no...there is. And if there wasn't, of course, you know...it wouldn't work. And that's important, because every, every falsehood, every false doctrine, has to have some element of truth in it.

Every...I mean, this is the nature of existence. Christianity there has to be truth there, the same with any religious tradition. If there wasn't truth there, you certainly would not have the masses of people that follow it, do. And...but it is the admixture of truth and falsehood which is so

dangerous, you see. This is what the Arabs traditionally call, <Arabic>, it's the poison in the honey. You see, because if it wasn't sweet, you would spit it out. And this is why, I think that...there are many brilliant critiques of Western Educational systems, you just need to read the books, and things like that.

Also, its difficult, for someone who is in Stanford, when they hear some. I mean its hard, if someone suddenly gets their PhD, and then you tell them, it was a big waste of time, although, I think , after a period of time, they come to that realization on their own. To be honest with you.

Most of the people that I've met, who have PhD's, like Sheikh Ahmed here, <laughing> they will tell you, in the depths of their inner honesty that, it was all a waste of time, usually. And that's really tragic. Because a lot of effort and work went into it. And a lot of time the students do believe in the system. And I've found this is consistent not just with the humanities, which end up creating the most inhumane people, but also the sciences as well. Because a lot of people become very disillusioned with the sciences, including Medicine, interestingly enough.

<Question> In terms, of grading, why not, Allah Subhanawatallah give us, each one, his place, or status or Grade, when we enter heaven, based on what we earned on this life?

<Answer> Well, this is a good point, you see, in other words, who is grading you. Is it the institution? Or are you learning for Allah, Subhanawatallah? If you're learning for Allah, let that grade be between you and Allah Subhanawatallah.

And ultimately, we will not know our grade until the Day of the Big Test. Which is "Uom ul-Kiyama". If you want to look at it, in those metaphorical terms.

But, an institution that is grading you, encourages knowledge to be sought for other then for the sake of Allah, it it, engenders in the student, actually the desire to impress their teachers, their peers, and those are all unfortunate side effects.

But I think the worst aspect of it, is that, ...is just what I said. When you put people on a continuum, and this person is an A student, and this is an F student. This is an arbitrary way of judging these people. And it's simply not true. It's not true. Many A students, are some of the worst students and, in the class. And many of the students that get poor grades are actually some of the best students. And that, I'm not making this up. This is true.

Students often times have a much better understanding, but because they haven't memorized all the stupid facts and figures, they don't do well on tests and examinations. And students that are brilliant at memorizing, and putting all these formula's in their head, although they don't understand it. If you slightly change the variation, suddenly they're...they can't, they have no creative responses.

So grading is just, ... measuring just one aspect, of, it's what's called sensible memory actually. And it does not measure understanding. And these quantifiable examinations, like the SAT and things like that. Really, you can go to take tests, and learn how to work out a lot of their so called reasoning systems. So,

Uh...uh huh? <talking in background>

<Question> Is it possible to attend a university and retain one's innocence of soul. How? What if I want to go to an Islamic school, where can I go, how do I get there?

<Answer> Well, this is part of our crisis. As Muslims, now I'm talking to people in here who are Muslim, which I think are the vast majority.

Part of the crisis, of the Muslim ummah, has been an educational crisis. And most societies, really their crisis is ultimately, a crisis of education and world view. And part of it is our educational systems were dismantled, and one of the things that happened in the late 19th century, is this attack on Taqlid, and this attack on studying all these old texts that were written a thousand years ago, and attempts to revise ijtiḥād, and this was a reaction by scholars who we will have good opinions of, anyway, because it's probably better. People like, Muhammad Abdu, uhhh, that you know, Allahualim what their intentions were, but, you know they may very well have been, good intentions, but... like Shakespeare said, "Sometimes good intentions, pave the way to hell".

So, because good intentions have to have Tawfiq as well, which is a whole other theological excursion.

So the idea, that our, you know, universities were dismantled, and literally al-Azhar, "Niyameeya", the universities in Samarqand, in India, in, in, even the Deoband is a modernist response, really, is a modernist response to the incursions of... you know, attacks on Traditionalism.

And the same with the Khairoun, in North Africa, and the Zaytuna in, and these institutions, also studied other things, it wasn't simply religious institutions, but the idea of secularizing knowledge, and creating institutions where secular knowledge was learned, without any foundation in our spiritual tradition, leads to an individual, in the Muslim culture, that is, they're very unhealthy. And these are the people that end up, unfortunately, being the, people that run the societies, and work in the ministries, and work in the, and this is a lot of where the crisis's come.

So, we need to create, literally, Islamic schools and universities. And this is a challenge of our age.

<Question> Who can teach me the Quran and Arabic, I don't even speak Arabic. Even if I did, how could I comprehend something so complex.

<Question> Uh... What else does it say?

<Question> Ohh.. You mentioned something about time being God, please elaborate.

<Answer> Well, that Hadith is <Arabic "Shabihat"> but the general interpretation of it is in, one narration where it says, <Arabic>, "In the <Yad> of Allah is the night and the day".

In other words, God is the possessor of time. And time is not something to be cursed, because the vicissitudes of time are, from God, and one of the things the Arabs used to do, was curse "Dhaar", time was like this bad thing that brought tragedy, and things like that. So, what the Islamic teaching was, to accept that even tragedy is a test, from Allah, Subhanawatallah. And that

one should not curse time, because time is part of Allah's creation, and not something extraneous or outside of Allah's creation.

<**Question**>Someday, I will...uhmmm...Where should we go, if we really want to study Islamic.

<**Answer**> That's another really good question. I mean unfortunately, the you know the Muslim world, what Khalid Blankmanship says is that really you can't trust any book written after 1860, in the Islamic world, because of the insidious effects of Modernism.

Modernity, had already began to influence, very seriously, the outlooks and views of Muslims. They were already redacting their tradition, or reinterpreting it, within the constraints of the, what is known as modernity. Which is the, You know, the exaltation of rationalism, & the idea of progress. Which is utterly false idea in the Islamic tradition.

The idea of progress, and if you call this progress, all this stuff we have out here, talking to a microphone, I mean, you have a warped understanding of what "things getting better" mean. Because...

<**Question**>In today's classrooms, how do you propose to change some of the problems, you mentioned in your talk. Grades, grading systems, technology, Jazakullah Khairoon.

<**Answer**> Grades again, I personally don't believe that grades are a good thing. I think they are a very negative thing. I think children need to be, should not be quantified by numbers.

There is, encouragement and giving children feedback is important.

But I think numerical grades, and telling a child that their work is excellent, and another child is average, children should be looked at as individuals, their work should be looked at as an individualist work, and not in comparison to other children. Because that is not the point to education. You should not be comparing them to other children, they are a thing unto themselves, and they have a right to be treated with that respect.

And this is that beautiful, what Muhammad Shareef mentioned about that Scholar being patient with the dim-witted. You know, and not being...and that's so beautiful because, it's just a recognition that Allah has given people different gifts. Some people have, can acquire things intellectually very quickly. And other people take more time.

And I know a beautiful story, I was told in Mauritania. I was frustrated by something, because I Wasn't understanding it, and one of the teachers there, told me about a man who had read a book nine times, and he couldn't understand it. And it was Mukhtasar Khaleel, which is a very hard book.

And on the ninth time, he just decided to give up, and he would quite studying, and go look after sheep or something.

And he was sitting down, thinking about this, all the energy he had put in, and he saw a little ant, going up an anthill carrying a piece, a crumb, of bread. And each time he would, right before he would get to the top, he would drop the crumb, and it would go down.

And he watched this ant do this 9 times, and on the 10th time, the ant made it over.

And he said, “Subhanallah, should I let an ant have a higher himma, a higher aspiration than me?”, and he decided to try it one more time, and he had an opening on his tenth time.

And again, this is indicative of the Muslim belief that Knowledge is an unlocking that takes place from God. Allah Subhanawatallah, is the one <Arabic>, you know, Allah is the one that opens up things. In Suhratul Fatiha, is the opener, and what do we ask for? <Arabic>, you’re asking for God’s guidance.

And, beautiful story of Ibn Sina, who, despite his faults, we should look at some of his good qualities.

Ibn Sina, whenever he had a difficult thing, that he could not solve, he would start doing “Rakat”, and he would not stop doing the Rakat, until the solution came to him.

And this was something, that these scholars knew, that Knowledge is from Allah Subhanawatallah. It’s not, Allah is the giver of knowledge. And the teacher is really like a midwife, whose whose, literally, is just helping the knowledge emerge from the child, from the student.

I mean that is what a teacher is. A teacher is a murabi. And a murabi is the one that nurtures, that pours the water in, but allows the plant to grow as it would. It just gives the sustenance to the..thing.

So, you know, a grading system, again, I think, just throw them out, I really do.

Its an innovation, it’s a Bida.It’s a Bida from...everyone talks about Bida, Now that’s a Bida. Nobody wants the... It’s an innovation from some Cambridge scholar from the 17th century, from just...

<**Question**>And technology, the thing about technology, “Why not learn about cyberspace”?

<**Answer**>Because you will literally be I mean, like in Russia they used to be sent to Siberia with an S. And here, they send them to Siberia with a C. I mean, literally, it should be seen as imprisoned in virtual reality. We want real reality, not virtual reality.

I mean, <Arabic>..., this is, “Allah increase me in Knowledge”, is not about cyberspace, I guarantee you that. It’s not, Cyberspace is actually a really frightening.

The World wide Web. Just listen to what words mean, Bait ul-Ankhaboot, in Arabic, I mean seriously, I’m not...I don’t think that’s a joke. Just look at it, in the Quranic vocabulary, what a web is, what the nature of a web is.

A web is meant to trap people. That’s what it does. And the thing is, is you’re just flying along, you know, and you get caught in a web, and before you know it, you’re the spiders lunch.

And that’s what it is, And that’s what they say, “Get online”, you know, there’s amazing commercials they do, this is part of it. Because, they want to sell technology, so they have this commercial where There’s this guy comes in and says, “Hey John, how you doing”

“Oh great, just, I just got online here.”

And he said, “Oh, listen, I have to go because I need to get flowers for my mom, its Mothers day, and then I need to get tickets to such.”

“Oh don’t worry Jack, we can do it right here, online, you know?”

And he says, “Really? Well what do you do? “

And he says, “Oh here, let me show you.”

“Oh no, I can’t do that”

“No no, it’s really easy.”

And before you know it, they’re both there,, having a great time, and this is, this is ...utopia, this is the great, ...uhmm...

<soft conversation in the back>

Yeah, absolutely.

<Question>Were you implying in your speech, that the only way to preserve your childs “fitra’ is to educate him or her in an Islamic environment?

<Answer>Absolutely, absolutely, that is the only way. And at best, we will only have that one, have on the thing, with the child and the parent, but the society is going against them, this creates a state of confusion. And that’s at best. There’s still going to be, and I’ve seen this all over the United States, Muslim youth, really wonderful, but they’re confused.

Really.

Go to Muslim conferences and see the, and I can see Muslim youth in here, and I know, they they, it’s very difficult trying to work out what all this means. And what we should do, and where do we go? These things, I mean, somebody said to me, you know it’s good since he got to America because now he has to think about where his food came from, because when he lived in Pakistan, he never had to think about halal food.

Well that’s the whole point! *<soft laughing>*, that you don’t have to think about that stuff. You know, that the butcher is a Muslim, so you can think about higher things. *<soft laughing>* Instead of your stomach.

Which seems to be a major concern, people in this country, Muslims that come here.

Oh, I would just say about Audrey Shabaaz, who came here, uhmm, who, if people are aware of her organization, which is called AWAIR, A-W-A-I-R, and, you know, what Audrey does, is she’s a teacher who literally goes all over the US, and other places as well, and gives talks on Islam, and I’ve seen her presentations, and they’re very impressive, and she’s had a major impact in in the field of, introducing some Islamic, perspectives, into dealing with Islam, in the school system, because now Islam is taught in the 7th and the 9th grade. And her organization needs the Muslim Communities support, and I think they’re going to be handing out, ways that you can help them, and it’s certainly a very worthy cause.

<Question>: If you have a choice of going overseas like South Africa or going to University in the USA, like Virginia or Chicago to study Islam, which would you recommend.

<Answer>: I would...based on what I've seen on the curriculum's of Virginia and Chicago, I would go to ... West Africa <laughing>.

Muhammad Shareef (1:22:31)>

Sheikh Hamza (1:26:18)>

<Basmallah>

Well, that is a good answer, that ..certainly, we, one of the, and I mentioned on my talk on this, on the shortcomings of the system education.

First of all, we have to realize that Muhammad Shareef and myself were, was actually a very primitive form of the classical madrassa system.

In fact, because it was in, such areas the colonialists, it took them a long time to get there, due to...malaria, because of the terrain, because they really weren't that interested, in terms of exploiting those countries, so there was a preservation of those traditions from there.

But the universities in Fez, in...Khairoun, in Zaytuna, in Tunisia, in Egypt, I mean these were universities that had, Medicine, that had astronomy, that had mathematics, that had many of these sciences.

Now there is no doubt, that initially there was an extraordinary, resurgence of that , especially during the Mutazila period, because to the emphasis on rationalism, and on the intellect itself. And that began to die down, and I think that ...there's very sound explanations on why that happened. And there's no doubt that the, two emphasize strictly on the religious training, and to neglect the aspects of these other sciences, is very dangerous to the balance of a society.

But what I would say, that the Muslims, view these sciences as inherently sacred in themselves, as a "Fard Khifaya". In other words, mathematics and all these, are religious sciences, so Islam does not separate from the secular and the sacred, in the same way as the Christian has done.

Somebody asked in here, explain how a Muslim can have the qualities of a Jew or Christian, you mentioned in the beginning.

Now, if there are any Jewish or Christian people in the audience, I just want to say , again, I'm talking at a archetypal level, not about individuals.

And, basically the Quranic archetypes it presents for the Jewish archetype, is that of people that know the truth but don't act according to it. And the other aspect is is gross materialism. And part of that is due, that the dominant Judaic tradition was that there was no afterlife.

In other words, the purpose of the Judaic tradition was the historicity, of the community itself. That the community was maintained historically. And the continuity of the Jewish tradition. This is why in the Jewish tradition, the sacred rituals, actually the sacred rituals, are historical rituals. Like the Passover, and these types of things, celebrating the exodus.

So, what happens when that is taken to extremes, is materialism. And in a sense, Isa Alahissalaam, was an antidote, to materialism, because he was pure, spirituality. In fact, he was called Ruh-Allah, <laughing>, that's his name. If you don't get the point...you know.

Uhm...He didn't have, a place where he put his head. The man was a complete aesthetic. He had left the world completely, and that was a cure. And sometimes medicine has to be an extreme, in order to cure the social sicknesses.

So he came, with a cure. This is why his teaching is not complete in itself. It must be taken into historical context. In other words, the Christian aestheticism, must be seen in the light of the material extremism of the age, when he came.

And to take it out of its historical context, perverts it.

And so what happens is you get the other thing, which is the extreme leaving the world. So, In other words, the Christian went astray by completely ignoring the world, and eventually the world came back with a massive, Now they've gone to the opposite, which is pornography everywhere, it's a complete indulgence, in the sensual.

And a, a complete forgetfulness about the Akhirah. Which is Surah ur-Rome...

<aside> Yeah, Inshallah.

Surah of the Romans, That Allah says, <Arabic from the Quran>,

“They know the outward of this world, most people don't know anything.

And then Allah, he negates their knowledge, then he confirms their knowledge, by saying, they know the outward of this world. But, as the next world, they are in heedlessness about it.

So, What happens, I think, is that when Muslims neglect although they know the truth, they neglect the religious traditions, and emphasize the materialism, or material aspects, this is that archetype that deviates, which is the Hebrewaic deviation. And when they go to the extreme of the other worldliness, and forget the concerns of this world, then they deviate in that other matter.

So, and then the Magian, in the sense, is an interesting, dichotomy of the two. Believing in the two Gods of the ... The God of light of the next world, and the God of Darkness in this world.

So, the ideal is to be a balance between of the two.

<**Question**> What happened to the golden age of Islam, when the Muslims were at the forefront of Mathematics, Science and Literature? Some blame the Mualim, who focused on ritualistic practice, while staying away from secular subjects, do you agree?

<**Answer**> Again, to just blame, I mean, the point is.<Arabic>,

The nature of civilization is to rise, and to fall. And what the Quran is, is an articulation of Sunnan, of why that happens.

Because, the Quran is trying to teach us, “Why”, not so much, “how”. Because we can learn the how.

But the why is the important thing, why do nations...?

And Allah gives us very clear reasons for that. And certainly not due to emphasis on Ibadaat. <laughing> I guarantee you, and that’s one of the reasons civilizations get Tawfeeq, or benefit, from Allah.

So the emphasis on Ibadaat, is not what is the cause of the Muslim decline. I think, part of it is, actually is the Kibir, or the arrogance, that began to manifest in the Muslim societies, where they saw themselves as superior to other societies, and some of the letters the Muslim rulers began wrote to write to Christian rulers and other rulers, were so denigrating. I Instead of, the Prophet, who use to write letters like <Arabic>, to the Great Emperor of the Romans, as a way, because he wanted to make dawah to them.

Whereas, you know, less then 500 years later, you have the Sultan, you know, sending a letter: <Arabic> From the Dogs of the dogs of Rome. You know. And, it’s just unbelievable.

So, I think that has more to do with it, then other things. And also a descent into the world, and leaving Jihad. And leaving the struggle, that Allah demands for people.

Anyway, I, there’s a lot of question, and I’m actually starting to collect questions.

<Aside> What’s that?

Oh alright, great...

Moderator (1:34:00)>

I’m afraid this is the end of the Question period. Really I hope you will understand, there are so many questions, wonderful questions, that we just can’t entertain...

Sheikh Hamza Yusuf(1:34:00)>

They’re actually very good questions

Moderator (1:34:00)>

Yes, wonderful questions really, On a positive note, I hear we have a sister outside, who wants to take shahadah, so it will be a wonderful thing for us to close this session this evening with a Shahadah.

So may the person, just, come upfront, Inshallah?

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/Lambs-to-the-Slaughter-with-Muhammad-Shareef#sthash.KP0VLq11.dpuf>

Transcript for Islam post-September 11: Ask Hamza Yusuf

Transcript Details

Event Name: Islam post-September 11: Ask Hamza Yusuf

Transcript Author: Frank Gardner

Description:

Date Transcribed: 9/13/2003 12:00:00 AM

Original URL: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/talking_point/3087728.stm#transcript

Transcript Text

Has the tradition of liberal, or classical Islam, been hijacked by a discourse of terror since the events of September 11, 2001? Over the last two years Islamic militants have been blamed for attacks in Indonesia, Kenya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and India. More than 350 people were killed in those attacks. How have moderate Muslim leaders responded to such attacks? What message are they giving out to both Muslims and the wider communities in the West? Hamza Yusuf has advised both the White House and the Arab League on Islam, and is founder of the Zaytuna Institute in California. Read Hamza Yusuf's article: [What the West can learn from Islam](#)
Transcript

Frank Gardner: Hello, I'm Frank Gardner. Welcome to this forum on Islam post 9/11. Today we're discussing whether or not Islam has been hurt by a perceived association with terrorism in the Western media since 9/11. A report out today warns that al-Qaeda has grown in power over the last two years - more than 350 people have been killed in attacks linked to the Islamic militant group. Of course, the vast majority of Muslims are peace loving people and abhor such attacks. But has the faith been tarnished by the terrorist brush? Our guest today is Sheikh Hamza Yusuf Hanson, founder of the Zaytuna Institute in California. He has advised both the White House and the Arab League on Islam, and is an outspoken advocate of better understanding between the Muslim world and the West. We've got a number of fascinating e-mails today. But before we go into these, let's just clarify something in my mind. Sheikh Hamza, how do you balance, how do you justify this controversy? You are an American and you are Muslim. You are part of a nation that is seen by many in the Arab world as being enemy of Muslims and you talk to President Bush. How do you balance all of these?

Hamza Yusuf: I think it's really important that people distinguish between this idea of personifying America - America, like England, like Saudi Arabia, like any other country has many, many different viewpoints and different understandings and that's part of what supposedly we're supposed to pride ourselves in the West about having dissident opinions and diversity. So I would just say that we can't say that the American opinion is one opinion, it's not. There's a lot of dissent and the Muslims in particular have a great deal of dissent with foreign policy - American foreign policy and that does not negate the fact that they're Americans.

Frank Gardner: Let's cut to the chase here Sheikh Hamza, where do you stand on President Bush's war on terror?

Hamza Yusuf: I think that the idea of a war on an abstract noun is unacceptable. I really believe that carpet-bombing, bombing civilian populations is a form of terror - it's state terror as opposed to vigilante terrorism. Obviously state terror - the state has a power to justify it. But at the end of the day innocent people killed anywhere - when I see Iraqi children in a state of terror because of bombs I consider that a form of terrorism. So I think the war on terror has to be a war on modern warfare - period.

Frank Gardner: Let's now address some of the e-mails that we have received. I want to start first with one which reflects a view that I hear a lot as a correspondent every time I go to the Middle East. Ahmad Alam, UK asks: Thousands of Muslims have been killed in Bosnia, over 3,000 Palestinians have been killed since 9/11 by the Israelis and hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children died because enforced UN sanctions. Why don't these events register in the Western mind? Are Christian, Jewish and Hindu lives worth that much more than Muslim ones?

Hamza Yusuf: Well let's look at Rwanda - over 800,000 people were killed in Rwanda. If we want to start quantifying numbers of deaths - what happened in Rwanda in 1994 - it wasn't that long ago - and people observed that and that was between two Christian peoples. The Tutsi which were the minority that were attacked - people stood by and watch that happen. So they're a lot of problems in the world today and the Muslims are not the only people that are the victims of terror and trouble. I think that the Muslims need to recognise that we ourselves have not done enough. I think the fact that happened in Africa and that there are Muslims countries in Africa and there was no display of outrage at what happened in Rwanda - and so are black people worth less than Arab people?

Frank Gardner: Interesting point, what you're saying basically is that this is a case of negligence rather than prejudice against Muslims?

Hamza Yusuf: Tribalism is still a very real force in the world and tribalism, if it's the Americans as a tribe or the English as a tribe or the Arabs as a tribe - it's a force and people tend to be more concerned about their own people than they are about other people and that's part of human nature. But it is also something that needs to be overcome especially in an increasingly interdependent world.

Frank Gardner: Let's pick up on one of the points you made there. Tara, USA asks: Why don't moderate Muslims exert more influence and spend more resources to recover their religion from the militants instead of constantly complaining about perceived injustices in the West?

Hamza Yusuf: That's a very good point. The why is - it's enough that we're asking why. We do need to work towards strengthening what really is traditional Islam because what's happening now is - this is almost like a Protestant Reformation - the idea of taking the Koran and interpreting verses according to my own understanding without recourse to a tradition. Vigilante violence has never been sanctioned in Islam - ever in the history of Islam. The idea of people taking things into their own hands it leads to anarchy and so I think that we should be opposed to vigilante violence. But we also have to be opposed to state sanctioned violence and what's being used, for instance, in the Muslim world - the war on terror is often used as a way of repressing any dissidence inside the Arab countries or inside the Muslim countries, so this is another problem. Unfortunately, the powerful states tend to have a blind eye to these types of problems and this creates more resentment, more animosity towards the West.

Frank Gardner: Peter Guidi, Holland: 'Moderate' Islam has been very reluctant to openly condemn the actions of the extremists. What can you say to reassure us that our fear of Islam is unfounded?

Hamza Yusuf: I don't agree, with all due respect. The Muslims have condemned and I think that there has been widespread condemnation, certainly by the scholars and by the people that have influence - there's been widespread condemnation. And I think what the Muslims would like to see is what can assuage their fears of the West.

Frank Gardner: What are those fears?

Hamza Yusuf: Iraq is a good example. Is Syria next? Is Iran next? Where's it going to? If we

want to talk about real fear and terror, I'm sorry, weapons of mass destruction, where are they? They're in America, they're in England, they're in France, they're in Israel, they're in India. That's where the weapons of mass destruction are. If we really look at this, the victims of all this are innocent people that are completely powerless and they're sitting by in a world that seems to not really care a whole lot. They're more concerned about whether Britney Spears has raised her tee-shirt a few inches or not than they are about people dying all over the world and it's not just the Muslims. If we look at this - Arnold Toynbee warned us in 1947 that the world is moving towards a very serious crisis which is going to be between the southern and the northern hemispheres.

Frank Gardner: When you brief the White House, have you put these points to them? I'm neutral in this ¿.

Hamza Yusuf: You're neutral - you can't be neutral. In a moral crisis neutrality is complicity. You can't be neutral, I don't accept that. Right is right and wrong is wrong and I recognise that there are shades of grey in everything but basic understandings are clear - who is right and who is wrong. In this case we have Muslim extremists saying, you're either with us or you're against us. And then we have had imperialists in the West saying, you're either with us or you're against us - well I can't be on either side. I don't feel comfortable on this side or that side.

Frank Gardner: Muhammad, England asks: How would you respond to these people who view you as "aligning yourself with the West"?

Hamza Yusuf: My alignment is with what I perceive as just and fair. If it's with the Muslims, then I'm with the Muslims, if it's with the West then I'm with the West. It's about justice and fairness. I am not a tribalist - I'm a Muslim but I didn't join a tribe. My religion says to stand by the truth - the Koran is very clear when it says [Arabic] Be witnesses for the sake of God justly even if it's against yourselves. And that's where I stand. I don't align myself with the West of the Muslim world. I align myself with what I perceive to be just and in accordance with my principles - the principles that I live my life by which are universal principles and that are embodied in the religion of Islam.

Frank Gardner: Yasser, UK: What do you think of groups such as Hizb ut Tahrir and al

mahijuroon, who glorify the attackers of 9/11 as 'heroes'? Do these views have an impact on Muslims in the UK and worldwide?

Hamza Yusuf: Well I find it really interesting that on the one hand there are so many Muslims that deny that there were even any Muslims involved in the incident and that it was a big CIA plot and then you have on the other hand they're lionised as martyrs. My reading of this is that anybody that can lionise this - all they have to do is watch some of the images of people jumping out of those buildings and reflect on that person and what right you have. I mean once we arrogate to ourselves who can give life and who can give death - once we arrogate to ourselves that - we're basically claiming that we have some divine right and that is against every principle in revealed religion. God is giver and the taker of life and to take innocent lives is completely unacceptable and those people cannot ever be considered - those people are not guided by the light of God, they're blinded by the light of God.

Frank Gardner: Are you referring to al-Qaeda?

Hamza Yusuf: I'm referring to people that kill innocent people.

Frank Gardner: But who's innocent? Because al-Qaeda would say - and I'm not in any way trying to justify their actions - but al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden and those around him, would say that they have a God-given right to defend Muslims - that all their actions are merely in defence of their faith - that's what they would say. Now to most people, those who died on 9/11 were completely innocent people - to al-Qaeda they are a part of a guilty party - that's their view. How would you answer that?

Hamza Yusuf: Well I would say first that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said in a very clear Hadith which is considered multiply transmitted - which means that it's at the same level of the Koran - it's prohibited to kill women and children in warfare. So I'm sorry the taking of lives of women and children is prohibited and that's been accepted practise by Muslims. Muslims are chivalrous. All of what's going on now is resentment - it's the slave morality that Nietzsche described the modern age as being engrossed in - it's the morality of people that have lost the sense of human dignity. One of the things about the Koran is it's very clear that when tribulations happen to you, the first thing that you have to do is rectify yourselves. That's very clear in the

Koran [Arabic] - when you were afflicted by a calamity you had afflicted the like of it on others before - you said where did this come from - say it's from your own selves. That's basically the Koran doctrine and to reject that and to begin to see these people as some kind of demons - they're bad therefore we are good - this is what's going to destroy the world. We've got idiots in the West that are claiming that the Muslims are demons and then we have idiots in the Muslim that are claiming the West are demons. I'm sorry, human beings each one of us has within us good and evil. There are good people in the West, there are good people in the Muslim world - there are bad people in the West and there are bad people in the Muslim world and most people have a mixture of those two working within themselves. We're not living in the medieval period. When you have a million British people that go out to say not in our name and sit and stand in the freezing cold for five hours - I saw that at Hyde Park - you can't say those people are crusaders and you cannot also justify blowing up their homes - they're good people that have real concerns.

Frank Gardner: We have an e-mail here Roderique in London saying: Is the current crisis that Islam is going through a result of the greater freedom of mind and deeper interaction with other cultures and religions of the last decades? What can we expect from the current transformation of Islam? I think first of all we'd have to address whether Islam is in crisis?

Hamza Yusuf: I think Muslims are in crisis. Islam is Islam. But so is the West. Look what's going here. Bernard Lewis asked, what went wrong in the Muslim world. I could ask Bernard Lewis what went wrong in the West? Look at our society - we've got dysfunctional societies on a global scale today and I can't point to anywhere and say it is some sort of ideal society. If people in America think that America's the idea society, I don't think they're reading the same sources that I'm reading about, about levels of depression, suicide, rape, crime, about the dysfunctional state of the schools, about abortion rates, about breakdown of families, divorce rates.

Frank Gardner: To be fair, on a lesser scale those things do occur though in Muslim countries.

Hamza Yusuf: Absolutely - they occur everywhere - that's my point. If you want my honest opinion about this, historically when people when they look back a hundred years from now, I think they're going to see the Muslims as a reasonably benign force on the planet. I think it's the West that they're going to look at as causing massive destruction in the biosphere, massive destruction in the oceans, massive destruction in the human condition - the fact that we're genetically altering our chickens to where they don't have feathers and beaks so that we can just

process them for fast foods. I really think that relatively the impact that Muslims are having, the harmful impact they are having on the planet I think is much less than other places in the world.

Frank Gardner: A lot of our viewers are asking the question. Is there such thing as liberal Islam?

Hamza Yusuf: I think there's liberal Muslims, there's conservative Muslims - those are terms that you can use - we'd need a whole programme to define liberal - what does that mean? If it means in the Latin sense of word, the idea of being free and open, I would hope that most people are free and open and are not prejudiced in their opinion. If it means that we water down Islam to where it no longer has any backbone and it's destined to the fate of Christianity in the West where it no longer really impacts on the society - I don't want to see that. I think that the moral power of Islam is the fact that it has had so little reformation, that it is actually in many ways its truths are still pristine - they can be misunderstood and that's definitely a problem, but I do feel that.

Frank Gardner: Let's pick up on the liberal point here. Brian, USA asks: Why is it that there is so much resistance to change in the Gulf/Asia area? Is there something in the Koran that directs the behaviour of Muslims to resist change on issues like women's rights and democracy?

Hamza Yusuf: I think first of - is all change good? We just assume naturally somehow that we're all progressing and that change is good - I have to question that. I like the fact that we have diversity on the planet. I like the fact that when I went to Dhamman and I spent a lot of time in Dhamman in the eastern province. They have a culture - it's not necessarily all from Islam - a lot of it is actually pre-Islamic - but it is a culture and it's relatively intact. And who am I to judge whether or not it's right or wrong. Judge not, lest ye be judged, as Christ said for by the standard which ye judge, ye too shall be judged. We take this assumption in the West that we have some kind of divine sanction to impose our views on the planet and I think we have to question that. The women in Saudi Arabia are often more educated and that's been my experience than even a lot of western women. Most of the women in Saudi Arabia go to university - they're not stupid women. If they're under their burka, that's one thing but they're not stupid women, they have opinions and they're human beings. This idea somehow that all the women in the Muslim world are oppressed - I look around in the West and I think the women here aren't doing that well either.

Frank Gardner: I would totally endorse that as a former Gulf correspondent and I should just

add to Brian in the United States there, that the Gulf States are not stagnant, they are moving - in their terms - incredibly quickly. The seeds of democracy are being sown there - it is not a stagnant place.

Hamza Yusuf: It isn't stagnant - it's a vital place. And also another thing about that region is we forget, we went through revolutions, we have the Cromwellian revolution, we had the industrial revolution - the West through incredible trauma to get where it is today and the Muslims are expected somehow to magically become enlightened in a few years.

Frank Gardner: Koshy, Sultanate of Oman: Why does Islam maintain its apostasy law? Does this not run counter to personal freedom? How can democracy work in Islam? Let's boil this down - is democracy compatible with Islam?

Hamza Yusuf: I think Noah Feldmann whose book "After Jihad" clearly indicates - he's a very brilliant legal scholar - that he feels that in some ways the Islamic legal tradition is one of the most of the most flexible legal traditions that we have and I think there's a lot of truth to that. I think that there are certain things that obviously are not completely compatible with modernity. But the vast majority of things - if we say that Islam is not compatible with democracy then we cannot call Israel a democratic state because Israel has laws taken from the traditional Jewish law that in many ways make the Islamic laws look enlightened for western people.

Frank Gardner: We have an e-mail from Aslan Ashraf in Oslo, Norway who says: Wouldn't the world be a more peaceful place if religion was practised separately from politics.

Hamza Yusuf: Well look at the 20th century - the bloodiest century in the entire human history is a secular century. I'm sorry, Hitler was secular - World War I and World War II, these are secular wars. All the wars that have been fought in our lifetime have been secular wars. There have been religious problems that exacerbate but generally the problem has been human beings. The problem is not religion, religion becomes an excuse. And it's a wonderful excuse because obviously if God says it's ok it feels a lot better doing it so there is that danger. But I would say that I do not want a secularised world where the principles of religion are not being practised. If you remove religion - and I don't care what enlightened secular humanists have to say - from humanity there are no constraints. The only constraint is totalitarianism and that's where it's headed. Once you remove internal constraints where people actually have a sense that there are

moral implications to my actions - once I remove that and it simply becomes positivistic law where the state tells me what's right and wrong and there is no God to do that, where there's no religious cosmology to do that - anything goes - that's the bottom line. That's what Nietzsche warned us over one hundred years ago that remove God and all is permissible and that's the truth. People that deny that are just denying reality.

Frank Gardner: Andrew Miller, Scotland: Would you agree that many of those who are called "Islamic extremists" are just extremists who happen to be Muslim? Aren't many of these people anti-the West because of the political and economic situations of their countries, rather than their religion?

Hamza Yusuf: That's what I was just saying. I think these are human problems. If you get Jewish extremists, Hindu extremists and Muslim extremists in the same room - they all seem to look very similar, think very similar and have an inability to have a civil discourse, not just between themselves as different faiths, but even amongst each other. So I think you're dealing with psychology, you're dealing with a pathology. Extremism is a human problem. We have secular extremists, we have Christian fundamentalist that go and shoot abortion doctors - they're terrorists, that's terrorism. They're arrogating to themselves something that is not for them to do, which is to take life.

Frank Gardner: I think possibly part of the problem though, in terms of perception here, is that where you have a secular struggle such as the Palestinian struggle for a homeland, that in some ways it is associated with Islam. When an Hamas suicide bomber goes and blows himself up and kills people in a Tel Aviv shopping mall and Hamas releases a video of him afterwards;

Hamza Yusuf: He's doing it for God.

Frank Gardner: Yes but the imagery is very graphic. In one hand he's holding a Kalashnikov and in the other he's holding the Koran. Can you blame westerners who haven't been to the Middle East associating Islam with terrorism?

Hamza Yusuf: Well first of all not that long ago most of the Palestinian resistance was communistic. People forget that in the '60s and '70s it was all communistic rhetoric. So Islam has been replaced for that. It's ideological and when religion becomes ideology it's dangerous. But conflating the two, I think is just a problem in people's minds. I'm not saying it's not fair for me

in my reasonably comfortable life in the West to judge people in the West Bank - I can't do that. I would rather that we explain these things with our social sciences than with religion - that's my personal opinion. I would much rather see suicide bombing understood within the context of despair and the psychology of despair and of trauma because I think a lot of these people are suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome or continued traumatic stress syndrome.

Frank Gardner: To return to the central theme of this discussion that we're having Sheikh Hamza, do you think that the violence which is carried out in the name of Islamist extremism is essentially secular in nature?

Hamza Yusuf: I think it's secular - you know terrorism to jihad is what adultery is to marriage.

Frank Gardner: It's a great line. I'm going to remember that one.

Hamza Yusuf: It's not mine.

Frank Gardner: Susan, UK: Do you feel that a dialogue is desperately needed between Islam and the militant Islamists who are doing so much damage to the standing of Islam around the world?

Hamza Yusuf: If you can dialogue with people it's wonderful. But if you can't dialogue with people - what's the point if people are not willing to listen? So I think we have a problem. Civility is what we're really suffering from. The fact that you and I can sit down and have a reasonably civil conversation - we can have differing opinions.

Frank Gardner: But then again we haven't been traumatised.

Hamza Yusuf: Well that's true but on the other hand a lot of these people haven't either. I find often the people that are most ideological whether it was communist - if you look at somebody like the Jackal, he was from a middle-class bourgeoisie family from South America and Osama bin Laden is the same thing. I think what's happens is you get ideologues that come into it that are not - they're actually, in a sense, projecting on to the people suffering something that is often not there. I think if you take Palestinian people generally - and this has been the experience of most people that have gone to Palestine - they're overwhelmed at how much humanity has been maintained in spite of increasingly dehumanising circumstances.

Frank Gardner: Aslan, Ilford, Essex, UK says: Do you think that you personally, as an Islamic scholar, have you changed in your opinions post September 11th and if so how?

Hamza Yusuf: I think things have crystallised for me. First of all, I'm a western person and I was raised in the West and I was raised in what probably would be called a liberal progressive background - those filters are there. So I come into Islam with those filters. The idea that I can simply remove those psychic filters from my mind it's impossible. So I'm always going to have my background as part of what's affecting me. I think the same is true for Muslims in the Middle East. So we do have differing views. But we need to listen to each other. So I feel that my views have crystallised in a sense. I was moving towards a lot of what I'm talking about now prior to 9/11. People can see that who've followed my talks and the things that I wrote just prior to 9/11 in fact.

Frank Gardner: Final e-mail here from Deasy B.Sanitioso, Indonesia who says: We are living in peace with our non-Muslim relatives, friends and neighbours in Indonesia; they should come and see. I disagree with him on that - there's been a lot violence perpetrated in the name of religion there. But anyhow he says, how can we explain that Islam is peace?

Hamza Yusuf: I think Islam is submission - it's not really peace, it's submission and the idea that peace comes from the submission to God. The idea also is that people have a right to choose for themselves and that's very clear in the Koran - there's no coercion in this religion. So people need to choose for themselves. What is clear historically is that the Muslims have been able to live with conviviality with other peoples and in many ways the pre-modern Muslims are a testimony to extraordinary human qualities that Islam engenders in people. So the tolerance of the Muslim world is a historical fact and I think it can be enhanced even because certain things in the modern world have enhanced those understandings and that's where we have move to - to a greater understanding of listening to each other and recognising that the real enemies in the world are people that are making money off war. The people that are producing and manufacturing all these weapons and spreading them all over the world. Most human beings want to live in peace with each other. That's been my experience.

Frank Gardner: Sheikh Hamza thank you very much. Well sadly that's all we have time for today. I'd like to thank you all for joining us, and also thanks to our guest, Sheikh Hamza Yusuf.

If you'd like to take part in more forums on Islam and the West then visit our website at www.bbcnews.com/islam. Next week we'll be discussing women and Islam. Goodbye.

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/Islam-post-September-11-Ask-Hamza-Yusuf#sthash.L2BbMbvE.dpuf>

Transcript for Interview with Sh Hamza After Hajj

Transcript Details

Event Name: Interview with Sh Hamza After Hajj

Transcript Author: Sunnipath

Description: Possibly, the original interview was conducted by Qalam International (which is gone now) by a sister named "Fauzia Malik". Sunnipath is hosting the interview now, so I think it is legitimate.

Date Transcribed: 1/1/1998 12:00:00 AM

Original URL: http://www.sunnah.org/fiqh/interview_yusuf.htm

As-salaamu Alaikum.

Walaikumumu Salaam.

Jazak-Allah khair for taking time out of your busy schedule to spend some of it with us.

You returned from the Hajj recently, and you have been previously haven't you?

Right.

What was different this time around as opposed to other times - or is each time different in itself?

I think the Hajj tends to reflect the state of the Ummah. That's one of the things about the Hajj is that you get to see the Ummah. It's a microcosm of the Ummah's condition. And I think what you see on Hajj is that the Ummah is not in good condition. What you see is that there is good in the Ummah, but the state, the overall state is not a good state and I think that's very reflective in the Hajj. One of the things that is very obvious is that there is, in a sense, a loss of what's called "Ithar," which is "deference to others." One of the essential characteristics of the Muslims is this idea of deference and adab and if you lose adab in the Haram, you certainly won't have adab in the place where you're coming from. And so what happens is that you have people who forget partly where they are. Some of the outward manifestations of that are a lot of people smoking, publicly, in the Haram, a lot of intermingling between men and women in ways that are inappropriate.

Also a total lack of concern for the cleanliness of the place - garbage is everywhere. I mean, already garbage as a phenomenon, it's a modern phenomenon. Humans have always produced

waste products, but consumer waste products are very different from classical waste products that were by-and-large, biodegradable - things that would go back to the earth. And here you're dealing with a lot of plastics and things that are not ... they're ugly. And there's just a lot of garbage, and what I think that is indicative of, the fact that the Muslims throw things around, is that there is an assumption that somebody else is going to pick it up. And so really what that's telling us is that nobody is taking personal responsibility, and I think that is by-and-large a real crisis in the Muslim Ummah as a whole, that people, individual Muslims are not taking personal responsibility for the condition of the Ummah, they're expecting that somebody else is going to take care of the problems, somebody else is going to take care of our troubles, and this has led to a type of apathy, and so I think that's all reflective in the behavior. At the throwing at the stones, I mean that's ... I mean, the people that I went with, we all threw our stones without harming anybody, without any pushing and shoving, and we went in and out. But we did it because we were consciously doing that, whereas there's a lot of people there that, they just don't care about other people, they're pushing people to get their ... to get in and do what they have to do, and they harm other people doing it. You can see this also around the Black Stone, you see it around the Tawwaf, and the trouble is is that by honoring other Muslims, Allah honors you, and by disparaging other Muslims, you only in the end, Allah says, "Ya Ayohan naas, Inna Baghiakum `a la Anfusikum" – "O mankind, your harm of other people is only against ourselves." And so by harming other people, what we're really doing is harming ourselves, and I think that's what's happening in the Muslim Ummah, and that's why we have this type of oppression in the Muslim Ummah towards one another, which manifests in the corruption within government organizations, the corruption within the private sector.

So are you saying that during the time you've been going back to the Hajj, things have gotten worse - you've perceived deterioration or improvement?

No, I don't think so - I don't think that ... I don't want to paint a completely bleak ... but one has to be realistic as well. For me personally, despite all of that, there are extraordinary things that take place, and it is still ... I mean the real task of every pilgrim is to, in spite of all these overwhelming circumstances, to experience the Hajj as a spiritual journey. I mean, that is a task. Something that probably earlier, in earlier time, it was easier. Now there's a struggle.

Why do you think Muslims have lost their tradition of mutual love and courtesy amongst each other, why do you think there has been that decline?

Because there is a breakdown in the whole concept of what an Ummah is. I mean this is the idea of "Divide and Conquer." It's taken some time to achieve, but there has been a breakdown in nationalities, there's now artificially created nationalities and borders that divide us, and those nationalities and borders have taken a life of their own, and so what happens is that people begin

to view themselves as Egyptians, as Algerians, etc. and not as Muslims, not as one Ummah and Allah says that, "You are one Ummah and I am your Lord." You have one Lord, one Ummah and one Prophet. We have in our Ummah all of the ingredients that no other communities have, not even the homogeneity of countries, don't have the ingredients of unity outside of their countries. In other words, the Japanese, they do have a type of solidarity based on their "Japanese-ness," but outside of that, outside of a bloodline, as a people and a language link, they don't have anything to unite them. Whereas with the Muslims, we have within our tradition all of the ingredients to unite the most diverse people and it's extraordinary, there's nothing else similar to it at all in history or in the world right now.

What America would like to do is they would like to unite the world based on shared "values," because I don't like that word, based on these shared values of "consumerism," "gratuitous consumption," of "pleasure" and the world is created basically for play and entertainment and as a pastime, and music and dancing and basically bestial lower-self behavior and this is what they're spreading all over the world. So everybody will look the same, in their jeans and their Nike shoes, and everybody will listen to the same sugared pop music, and everybody will eat the same hamburger, french fries and milkshakes and everybody will have the same banal perspectives on the world. So this type of unity which is based on reducing the human being to an automaton, who has no volition of its own and who simply sleepwalks through life without any sense of identity, awareness or tradition. This is the unity they're hoping to achieve with this idea of some kind of "One World." Maybe with some New Age spirituality thrown in there because people do tend to have some spiritual needs, so we can throw in some New Age ... it's all "one" in any case, right? So take a little dabble from this religion and that religion, and we can all be Buddhists, and then you can just meditate, or something like that, or they'll, I'm sure, be providing soon enough, "Spiritual Television."

Have you read the book by James Redfield, it's very appropriate to what you're talking about, "The Celestine Prophecy?"

I actually have read that. I think that's exactly what I'm talking about. It's this kind of New Age religion that's being promoted - which is dajjalic in its nature because it's looking at certain spiritual truths and it's distorting them. Iblis is the mimicker, right, I mean Allah says that His throne is on water, so Iblis made his throne on water. Iblis is the great mimicker; he's the mocker. And so the pseudo-religion always will mimic true religion, and unfortunately when you don't have people that have the ability to discern and distinguish between truth and falsehood, then they spend their life being misled and groping in darkness.

Do you think the intellectual decline in our Ummah can in any way be related to the decline in the Arabic language and its importance?

That's a very strong element in the whole overall decline. Out of the several hundred languages in the world, there are only a handful of languages that are considered civilizational and Arabic is certainly one of them.

Right now, the language of power and dominance and of discourse at whatever level - whether commercial, philosophical or scientific - is English. And the power elite in the West are certainly capable of articulating in the English language. Whereas in the Arab world, you would be hard pressed to find people capable of articulating verbally - using the Arabic language as a vehicle for discussion and serious thought - unless they had been well-trained. More can actually write and part of that is because the Arabic language is so deeply rooted in Classical Islamic knowledge.

English has a worldview, and now you find in the Arab world, people who have English as their second language - usually their higher education will now be in English. Every language contains within it the roots of the worldview of the people that produced it - so by taking on the English language, one is taking on a Western worldview, and you can't avoid it. By abandoning the Arabic language what people are doing in fact is abandoning the worldview that the Qur'an provides. Also, the Muslims had a deep sense of the linguistic power and the actual underlying expression of reality embedded in the language. The language of the Qur'an is the language of truth, and therefore the one who learns it and is deeply into it will ultimately be confronted with reality through the expression of the Arabic language.

Why do you think so many pieces of good Islamic literature are being written by non-Muslims - e.g. George Makdisi's "Rise of Humanism in Classical Islam and the Christian World?"

Partly because the West is the dominant power elite, and the dominant powers always have intellectual apparatus to maintain their power - part of the apparatus, what it will do is it will enable and facilitate research and facilitate intellectuals to explore/pursue ideas and thoughts ultimately for the benefit of the power elite. But what will come out of that often is that people who do have inherent brilliance are able to have the time and the freedom to think deeply about matters. This is the whole system of endowments in the West - if you look at most of these people who do these things, they'll often have a paragraph of gratitude towards some fellowship that was given to them, which gave them 2 or 3 years to do the research they needed to do. What happened in the Muslim world is that because there is no power (the Muslim world has in fact become of secondary importance) most Muslim governments are in no way interested in pursuing intellectuals - in fact, quite the opposite. They want to prevent them from thinking, they

don't want them to think. The fact that the West does allow these intellectuals to pursue things is in no way indicative of some desire for truth.

That is a very important note.

Right. Sometimes, truth is a by-product of it, because in order for them to fulfil what they want to fulfil, they allow an expressive control of their intellectuals - but because of the nature of the mechanism, it will in the end, only serve the power elite.

Someone remarked that "sitting before a teacher who passes you knowledge is like taking a photograph - in that by the light, the image of what is in front of you is implanted in your heart. This is education." Please comment - why can't we receive education from reading books?

PART OF IT IS THE IDEA OF TRANSMISSION. Anybody who has studied with a teacher will know the answers to that question and anybody who hasn't won't. It's the difference between hearing about something and experiencing it. OUR TRADITION IS A TRADITION OF TRANSMISSION. OUR PROPHET (SAW) WAS TAUGHT BY AN ANGEL - THAT ANGEL WAS TAUGHT BY RABB-UL-IZZA - THE LORD OF POWER. And the Qur'an says, "Over everyone who possesses knowledge is someone who has more knowledge." When Musa (as) was asked if there was anyone more knowledgeable on the earth than he was, he replied "No." But Allah then sent him to study with Al-Khidr, who the majority of scholars say wasn't even a prophet, so here's a prophet being sent to a non-prophet and it was a reminder to Musa (as) that one can never assume that there is not someone that they can learn from. Part of the modern crisis in the Muslim Ummah is we have auto-didactic scholars - the damage that they have caused is, I think, extraordinary, and one of the signs of the end of time is a Hadith in which the Prophet (saw) said knowledge would be taken from a "Saghir" which means "a little one." Ibn Abd ul-Barr, the great Andalusian commentator on Hadith, wrote that what this Hadith means is that the chain would be broken towards the end of time - PEOPLE WHO HAD NOT TAKEN THEIR KNOWLEDGE FROM THE PREVIOUS GENERATION WILL BEGIN TO TRANSMIT KNOWLEDGE, AND THAT KNOWLEDGE WILL BE THEIR OWN OPINION AND NOT TRANSMITTED KNOWLEDGE. And from the Muslim perspective, truth is not something that needs to be discovered - it's something that needs to be learned. In the Western understanding, truth is something that needs to be discovered, truth has not been given to man - it's something that man needs to discover for himself. In the 20th Century, although that meta-narrative is disappearing, i.e., the post-modern phenomenon is in a sense a capitulation to the idea that there is no truth - and if there is truth, it is not with a "T" but with a "t" - meaning, "your truth may not be my truth." What the post-modernist thesis is to say that, really what we have is not some grand narrative of the search of truth, but rather meta-narratives or small narratives of the truth, that each one is as equally true as the other which is ultimately saying that nothing is

true. Because once you say everything is true, what you're really saying is nothing is true. If I say it's wrong to kill and somebody says, well that statement has no meaning because what is "wrong"? – what's your definition of wrong? And because wrong cannot be technically defined within the dominant discourse of the 20th Century, therefore it has no meaning. Whereas, if I say, "It is wrong," and "wrong" is "that which Allah has made prohibited," I am laughed out of the auditorium because what I'm saying is that "truth has been revealed by God" - that is no longer an accepted premise for the modern social discourse. So we can't talk of morality - all we can talk of is legislation, and legislation is what the latest vogue is - should we have the death penalty or shouldn't we ? ... it becomes a debate, and there's nothing in stone so to speak. Like "Thou shalt not kill" - it becomes "should we kill or shouldn't we? Well, let's take a vote." Truth becomes a democratic process, and that is very alien to the Islamic tradition. So the idea that truth is something which is transmitted from generation to generation is no longer acceptable within the dominant social discourse. AND FOR THE MUSLIMS THAT HAS BEEN THE TRUTH BECAUSE THE PROPHET (SAW) SAID THAT THIS KNOWLEDGE - I.E. THE TRUTH/REVELATION WILL BE CARRIED IN EACH GENERATION BY UPRIGHT PEOPLE AND TRANSMITTED TO THE FOLLOWING GENERATION. SO MUSLIMS HAVE ALWAYS SEEN THAT KNOWLEDGE IS A TRANSMISSION, FROM THE BREASTS OF THOSE WHO KNOW TO THE HEARTS OF THOSE WHO DON'T KNOW.

Many sisters wish to travel to Muslim countries to learn the Deen from those who know, but they are concerned about the issue of travelling without a Mahram.

First of all, living in the non-Muslim lands - it is accepted in Shariah that if a woman makes hijrah from the land of the non-Muslim to the land of the Muslims, she doesn't need a Mahram - that's a well known principle in Islamic jurisprudence. The way I view it is I think that a woman is safer without a Mahram in the land of the Muslims than she is with a Mahram in the land of the non-Muslims.

To what extent can a female, married or unmarried, affiliate herself with a sheikh whilst keeping within the boundaries of the Shariah?

Women traditionally studied with teachers, it just has to be done with adab. There's obviously more limitations on the female, the Qur'an says the male is not like the female. It's obviously better and more preferred if a woman learns from a female sheikh, and there used to be a considerable number of them in the Muslim Ummah. There isn't anymore and it is even quite unusual now to find a male teacher who is of any high caliber, but to find a female is an anomaly in the Muslim world right now.

With regards to the Shariah, why do you think that the rules regulating trade/industry/business transactions have almost been abandoned by the Muslims?

Because we've become subject completely to the dominant world order, which is a capitalistic, Western world order and so international law is now Western law, this is history, just read what happened in the 19th century with the abdication of Islamic Law and the usurpation of its place by Western legal systems - with some amalgamations like the Anglo-Mohammadan law, where personal matters (e.g., inheritance & marriage) were left to the scope of the Islamic Tradition, but those matters that related to business and commerce and penal codes became under the jurisdiction of Western secular law.

In the "Muwatta of Imam Malik (ra)," he places a lot of emphasis on the "Aml of Medina." What is the difference between this and Hadith?

Within Imam Malik's (ra) framework, he sees that Medina has a unique status that other cities do not have during the time of the Tabi`een, because what he says is the Tabi`een were people who lived with the Sahabah, there's over 10,000 Sahabah buried in Baqia who died in Medina. He's saying that this city was a city that had a special place in Islam that no other city had - even Mecca - because Medina is the city in which the Islamic legal system and the Islamic social order was fully implemented. For that reason, he in a sense is an inheritor of a social expression of the totality of the Islamic teaching and so his recording that in the "Muwatta" is in a sense a recording of what he would consider a city in Submission, and for that reason he would say that if I find an isolated Hadith, not Muttawatir (a Hadith that has several transmissions), with one or two chains from the Sahabah and I find 1000 of the people of knowledge from the Tabi`een in Medina doing something, Imam Malik is saying that their actions override the solitary transmission of that Hadith - i.e., the fact that they're not following that Hadith and that they were people who lived in the presence of the Sahabah, and that practice would've been done in the presence of the Sahabah, among whom were men like Ibn 'Umar and 'Umar ibn al-Khattab and women like 'Aisha, that these people knew better what was the final Islamic decision on the matter. Imam Malik for that reason would consider the action of the people of Medina - when he says that, he really doesn't mean everybody, he means the people of knowledge in the city, and the city was filled with people of knowledge. Imam Malik felt that the action was a Hadith, only it had achieved the status of Muttawatir because of its agreement in the city of Medina - even if he did not have an actual verbal transmission of that matter - e.g., there's a sound Hadith that the Prophet (saw) told people not to fast on Friday, but in the "Muwatta," Imam Malik knew that Hadith and said, "I found the people of knowledge in this city fasting." - they considered it to be a virtuous day to fast. His point was that they were doing that action in the presence of the Sahabah, and none of the Sahabah said you can't fast on Friday. Therefore, Imam Malik is saying that the fact that they transmitted this as a virtuous day to fast, and it was not rejected

because of that Hadith, he considered isolated transmissions of the Hadith to be weaker than the transmission of Aml, of action.

It's a difference of opinion, but it is an accepted principle in Usul. Imam Shafi'i and Imam Abu Hanifah don't agree with it, nor does Ahmad, but they do agree the Aml of Medina is higher with regards to certain things e.g.. Measurements.

Have you written/published any works?

I'm in the process of doing so - I'm working on a few things. I've published a few articles and things.

There are Muslims who say that we should not attach the word "Sayyidina" to the Prophet (saw). Is there such a thing as loving our Prophet (saw) too much?

The Prophet (saw) said in a sound Hadith "I'm the Sayyid of the children of Adam," so he is our Sayyid whether people like it or not. Allah (swt) praises Yahya (as) in the Qur'an by calling him "Sayyidan wa Hasoora," that he was a Sayyid in the Qur'an AND OUR PROPHET (SAW) IS CERTAINLY GREATER THAN YAHYA (AS). "SAYYID" MEANS MASTER IN THE ARABIC LANGUAGE, AND HE IS OUR MASTER.

You should not say Sayyidina in the Fard prayer when you do the Tahiyya - there is an opinion that you should, but it is a weak opinion. But when we speak of the Prophet (saw), we should call him the Messenger of Allah, the Prophet of Allah or we should call him Sayyidina. WE SHOULD NOT SAY MUHAMMAD (SAW) WITHOUT PUTTING SOME HONORIFIC TITLE BEFORE HIS NAME. ONE OF THE THINGS THAT QADI 'IYAD POINTS OUT IN THE SHIFAH IS THAT ALLAH (SWT) ALWAYS IN THE QUR'AN CALLS HIS PROPHETS BY HONORIFIC TITLES, E.G. "YA AYOHAL MUZAMILL," "YA SIN" AND SO ON. IT'S PART OF THE ADAB OF THE MUSLIMS.

WITH REGARDS TO LOVING THE PROPHET (SAW) TOO MUCH, IT REALLY HAS NO MEANING {NOTE: Sheik Hamza Yusuf here is stating that no one can love the Prophet overmuch ... i.e., it can never be shirk, no matter how much you love him ...}. HE IS THE MEANS THROUGH WHICH WE HAVE COME TO KNOW ALLAH. THE HADITH SAYS, "WHOEVER HAS NOT THANKED PEOPLE HAS NOT THANKED ALLAH," this is why massive respect is owed to the parents, because they were the means through which you were given life. Even though it's Allah (swt) who gave you life, Allah has commanded that you honor your parents in a way that no one else has been given that high status in the Qur'an - after Allah and His Messenger (saw), high status is given to parents in terms of obedience, so after obeying Allah and His Messenger (which is obeying Allah), the next highest thing is the parents.

The Prophet (saw) said, "None of you truly believe until I am more beloved to you than your own self." And so, if you love the Messenger of Allah (saw) less than you love yourself, then you don't have true iman. And if you love the Messenger of Allah (saw) less than you love your parents or your children, then you don't have true iman.

Many people would like to know about the Zaytuna Institute and why you decided to found it/what are your goals in relation to it?

Zaytuna is just a vehicle for doing the work I'm doing. To me, institutions don't really mean anything. Ultimately, institutions are nothing other than the people that run them. I think the important thing for us to remember is that ultimately we are all mortal, and that our time is limited, and so the best actions are those actions that continue on. My hope is that this work will continue on after my lifetime. The work is nothing other than trying to teach the message of Islam. To establish institutions that guarantee or give whatever worldly guarantee that we can have that that will continue on, is part of our tradition. The creation of endowments is to make sure that the traditions of Islam would be maintained from generation to generation. It's my small contribution to the overall picture. What the Muslim world needs is for Muslims to take it upon themselves, at the personal level, maintenance of the tradition, and it has to happen. It's not the task of any one individual, but the task of an Ummah. But an Ummah is nothing other than the individuals that comprise it. Muslims have to recognize that our tradition is disappearing, and that there has to be efforts to re-ignite learning at a senior level.

What about the Rihla Course?

The Rihla again is an attempt also at doing the above. What it will hopefully move to is a full-time type of Madrassa, but right now it's a summer program of one month.

The problem is that the Muslims have fallen into the Western approach - which is the conference approach. We have conferences, but the conferences last a few days, they are comprised of talks that are in a sense not so much informative as inspirational, and there's not a real transmission of knowledge, rather a type of narrative storytelling which is not conducive to the transmission of Islamic knowledge. Islamic knowledge means sitting at the feet of people, who sat at the feet of people, back to the Messenger of Allah (saw).

Even within the Western corporate model that created the conference phenomenon, it's still buried in institutions. Conference papers are actually the result, in the Western model, of research which will end up being an abridged synopsis of someone's work, and if anyone attending the conference is interested in it, then they can actually have access to the work of that

person. What happens in our conferences though is that there isn't any work really being done other than this type of inspirational model. I don't think we should eliminate conferences altogether, but I think people have to recognize the limitations of the format.

What books are you currently reading?

"The Saffwat -at- Tafsir" of Muhammad Ali Sabooni, and also "The Venture of Islam" by Marshall Hodgkin.

Interview by Fauzia Malik

?Copyright 1998 Qalam International.

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/Interview-with-Sh-Hamza-After-Hajj#sthash.0O4lbet2.dpuf>

Transcript for Interview on Education, Inner City, Empowerment

Transcript Details

Event Name: Interview on Education, Inner City, Empowerment

Transcript Author: Shaykh Faraz Rabbani

Description:

Date Transcribed: 7/5/2005 12:00:00 AM

Original URL: http://qa.sunnipath.com/issue_view.asp?HD=1&ID=2485&CATE=115

1. EDUCATION AND THE INNER CITY One of the broad, common threads that runs through Zaytuna Institute, the Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN) and a host of other Muslim organizations in the United States is that of education. Organically grown organizations will necessarily have differences, one from the next, in substantive focus, instructional method and academic intensity of educational programs. Despite these organizational differences, what are the core elements of a successful curriculum that will (a) sustain and (b) empower contemporary Muslims?

SHAYKH HAMZA: The key element of any sound curriculum is to ensure that basic humanistic tools are imparted to help a student become a better human being and a critical element in the human process. By critical here, it is implied that someone is able to see what's wrong, identify it as a wrong and then able to evaluate the steps needed to redress the wrong.

For instance, a major wrong in contemporary America is consumerism (i.e. the goal of life is to accumulate wealth and material goods). This disenfranchises the poor from a societal project and builds resentment, which leads to anger and envy, which are two of the seven deadly sins, ... and one alone is enough to kill you! When we assess the project of consumerism, we realize that as an increasing venture it becomes clearly untenable for large numbers of people. It is a selfish path and ignores the very reality that if resources continue to be exploited at present rates, we will exhaust the earth's plentitude. An example: the monitoring of areas in which have ocean fishing takes place has shown that in the last twenty years, over ninety percent of the fish have been decimated. The root problem is that fish are not allowed to replenish their numbers due to over-fishing of areas that once had seemingly inexhaustible resources. Much of the fishing is processed into cat food. In most cultures, cats live off the leftover food of families, but here, they are spoiled into tasty treats that devastate our ocean's supplies further upsetting the delicate

balance of the natural food chains in the oceans. Due to the critical nature of this type of information, it may surface from time to time; however it isn't news that one finds in daily corporate owned newspapers.

A student must also be able to think critically about the world he or she finds himself or herself in. So teaching students to think is of the essence of any serious training. For Muslims this includes an ability to access divine or sacred tradition in his or her daily life – in other words, to make the message real through implementation. This can only be done in an environment in which people are helped to live the message of submission to God.

2. LEADERSHIP, ADVERSITY, AND GLOBAL CONSCIOUSNESS

IMAN's Taking it to the Streets is held in Chicago's Marquette Park, where Martin Luther King, Jr. marched, and was stoned, only decades ago. Many Muslims today have drawn analogies between the current state of Muslims in America and the state of the broader African-American population during the era of MLK, Malcolm X, Thurgood Marshall and others. To what extent are these analogies on point? How can a focus on the history of race relations in this country enhance or detract from a contemporary Muslim's consciousness?

SHAYKH HAMZA YUSUF:

Enfranchisement is a process that has been present in this country since the start. Many communities who have been here for hundreds of years, in the case of native people, millennia, are still struggling for full inclusion into America. However, we must not despair due to clear signs of improvement. To deny advancement in many areas is ingratitude. Minority communities are in fact majorities in many communities now and they are running entire cities in America for the first time in over two hundred years. There is an immense opportunity to realize the dreams of philosophers of the past today in this country. The idea of equality before the law has rarely been conceived in human history, let alone achieved, and yet it is an ideal that is accepted now by the majority of people in this country. It still has a long way to go before it is indeed a reality experienced by all peoples in all cases. The Muslims are at the end in a long line of people that have come to these shores or were already here, attempting to realize their rights as equal before the law.

Many people before the Muslims have struggled and many have died in order that we as offspring or migrants might enjoy the rights that we do today. Those people must never be forgotten; it is incumbent upon Muslims in America to know their stories. The stories have people of all colors as protagonists. There have always been people of color who have opposed the injustices of racism, sexism and intolerance but we should not forget that there have been numerous good white people who have opposed injustice and they should not be forgotten. The

issue cannot be black and white but rather wrong and right. It is as simple as that. We stand not with our tribe but with our principles and should they be against our tribe then we must act as witnesses "unto God even against yourselves."

3. "PROGRESS" IN THE INNER CITY AND THE WORLD You have previously discussed the "myth of progress" and asserted that the highest level of spiritual progress was achieved over a millennium ago in the desert and oasis of Arabia during the time of God's Emissary, may He grant him His peace and blessings. While "spiritual entropy" may be a regrettable reality facing humanity (at least en masse), today's Muslims in and out of the inner city, and abroad, hold conflicting views about the extent to which achieving material comfort necessarily involves dealing with, or is equated with, embracing "capitalism" with all of its arguably negative aspects (exploitation of labor, riba, corruption of big business, environmental neglect, etc.) and thereby losing religion. Is there a confluence or a contradiction in attempting to achieve both spiritual and material success in the contemporary globalizing economy?

SHAYKHA HAMZA YUSUF:

The problem with poverty in America is that it deprives the poor of their dignity. This is so for a number of reasons: one, the Calvinist view, which affects many Americans, states that wealth is a sign of God's blessings upon the person. In that way, poverty is seen almost as a punishment. In essence, this perspective states that in this land of plenty, there must be something wrong with you if you don't have anything. This way of viewing the world permeates our culture and does untold damage to countless souls.

Islam teaches us that wealth is inner wealth. The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said, "Contentment is an inexhaustible treasure." He also said, "Wealth is not a lot of goods but it is being satisfied with what one has." The endless pursuit of more is a disease, and as the hadith (prophetic tradition) states, "Nothing will fill the mouth of the child of Adam except the dirt of the grave. If someone had a mountain of gold, they would only desire another."

What we need to learn in this country is how to be poor with dignity. We need to learn to keep clean houses, clothes and bodies, to eat pure food, and to do this with money earned untarnished by illegal transactions. This is available to anyone willing to turn to God for support.

We must also free ourselves of resentment and envy of others and what they have. The Prophet, peace be upon him said, "Look to those better than you in your spirituality but look to those with less than you in your material reality. For indeed that will help you to aspire to be better and to be grateful for what you have."

Finally, poverty is "all my glory" according to the richest man that ever lived, the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. He chose to lower his standard of living in order that others might have more. That is his way.

- See more at: <http://sheikhamza.com/transcript/Interview-on-Education-Inner-City-Empowerment#sthash.uNmF7gFO.dpuf>

Transcript for How the Quran was compiled

Transcript Details

Event Name: How the Quran was compiled

Transcript Author: SheikhyNotes Blog

Description: Source: Unknown. Found on SheikhyNotes Blog.

Date Transcribed: 12/13/2007 12:00:00 AM

Original URL: <http://sheikhynotes.blogspot.com/search?q=How+the+Quran+was+compiled>

Anything worth doing should begin with Bismillah Semitic languages have words with have a three letter root Three is the beginning of multiplicity. The word Quran comes from a root word to mean city, Qaaf, Raa, Ya And also the word Qa, Ra, Ah which means to recite Every civilisation is rooted in a book The Greeks would base theirs on Homer For the Arabs, there was no book until the Quran.

Children are in the oral world for the first five years of their lives. They hear stories and their imagination come to life Now we have the children being brought up by the television and this link is severed.

Arabs are an oral people The real meaning of the word Quran is the recital It is know as a book and the word Ka, Ta Ba means to join together Arabs used to send their children to bedions out side the city areas because they where very eloquent.

The Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) was born in this culture, in a tribe called Hashim. Before his fourteenth birthday he would enjoy isolation in the cave of hira

Orientalists changed their stance on Islam when oil was found in the Arab region

An angel come to him (peace and blessings be upon him) during his time in the cave and the first word the angel said was, "Read" He said, I am not a reader After this event the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) went to his wife, she comforted him and then went to her uncle Warwa ibn Nawful who said this is the Namus which means angel and its Greek root means law.

This is the beginning of the revelation The first thirteen years is known as the Meccan period, the dominate themes of the Quran. The Quran is a non-linear book, you have to surrender your desire for linaryty 19 Juz revealed in Medina and 11 in Mecca The Prophet (peace and blessing

be upon him) saw himself as the first sign of the end of time There are still people who are people able to memorise the Quran The Quran is being memorised and written in the Meccan stages.

The Meccan suras start with o' humanity and the medina o' you who have accepted (believers) these were the people who responded The focus is one character, building a society The entire Quran was written down in during his lifetime (peace and blessings be upon him) In 633, after the battle of Yamnam, many Quran reciters had been killed and Umar asked Abu Bakr to collect the Quran During the caliphate of Uthman, he noticed that some of the Muslims had begun to differ on the recitation of the Quran as it was initially written without dots or vowels. He makes a master copy from the gathered text and copies were sent to every major city in the Muslim world. It was protected by oral recitation.

Qurtabi narrates a story about a man who copies the old testament in beautiful calligraphy with mistakes and sends it to a Jewish Rabbi. Who after reading it, sends it back and says it's a wonderful copy and he does the same with new testament and the Christian doesn't notice the mistakes and says it's a wonderful copy. When he does this to the Quran. The Muslim scholar says to burn it as its got mistakes.

It's a historically correct document. The word "we" in the Quran is used for greatness. This is appropriate for Allah Subhanu wa ta'ala but not for people. This is a plural of magnification and doesn't not indicate to plural gods as some people refer to There are seven dialectal ways recitation (another three are unconfirmed) of the Quran, it doesn't not change the meaning

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/How-the-Quran-was-compiled#sthash.6DjfIFRA.dpuf>

Transcript for Guardian Article: If you hate the West, move to a Muslim Country

Transcript Details

Event Name: Guardian Article: If you hate the West, move to a Muslim Country

Transcript Author: Jack O'Sullivan

Description: Fresh from the Guardian

Date Transcribed: 8/10/2001 12:00:00 AM

Original URL: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2001/oct/08/religion.uk>

Transcript Text

If you hate the West, emigrate to a Muslim country – October 8, 2001

Hamza Yusuf is arguably the west's most influential Islamic scholar. Many Muslims find his views hard to stomach, but he is advising the White House on the current crisis, and today he will be talking to religious leaders in the UK. Jack O'Sullivan meets him.

A few days ago, for reasons that remain rather unclear, the FBI decided to pay a call on the home of Hamza Yusuf. "He isn't home," said his wife. "He's with the president." The FBI agents did not seem to believe her; they called the White House to check. "He's got 100% security clearance," said the voice at the other end. The FBI agents did not return.

Yusuf, an Islamic teacher, was indeed with the president. At the meeting, he advised Bush that the military term Operation Infinite Justice was blasphemous to Muslims. The president listened. He said he was sorry that the Pentagon, which chose the title, had no theologians on staff. The name was changed.

Then, after joining in with God Save America, Yusuf stood outside the White House and delivered an unequivocal message, which even Margaret Thatcher could not fault. "Islam was hijacked on that September 11 2001, on that plane as an innocent victim," he said.

Imam Hamza Yusuf, who runs an Islamic institute in California, is fast becoming a world figure

as Islam's most able theological critic of the suicide hijacking. This afternoon he will address British religious leaders at the House of Lords on the subject.

His speech will upset many Muslim radicals here. A charismatic and popular speaker, Yusuf openly declares his belief that Islam is in a mess. He wants Muslims to return to their "true faith", stripped of violence, intolerance and hatred. Nor does he pay much deference to the states in which many Muslims live. When we meet, he declares: "Many people in the west do not realise how oppressive some Muslim states are – both for men and for women. This is a cultural issue, not an Islamic one. I would rather live as a Muslim in the west than in most of the Muslim countries, because I think the way Muslims are allowed to live in the west is closer to the Muslim way. A lot of Muslim immigrants feel the same way, which is why they are here."

His rise to prominence is even more extraordinary given his unusual background. Hamza Yusuf, 42, started life as Mark Hanson, son of two US academics, only converting at 17. Thirty years ago, he seemed destined not for Islamic scholarship, but for the Greek Orthodox priesthood. Then, a near-death experience in a car accident and reading the Koran diverted him towards Mecca.

But he cannot be easily dismissed as a western patsy, a "collaborator", as his opponents have already dubbed him, or as Bush's "pet Muslim". Trained for more than a decade by the best Islamic scholars in the United Arab Emirates, Algeria, Morocco and Mauretania, Yusuf's learning commands considerable respect, particularly with the English-speaking elites of traditionally Muslim states. Although he calls on Muslims to see what is good in western society, he has a long track record of criticising western decadence, injustice and impoverished spirituality.

"He confronts what it is to be young, British and Muslim," says Fuad Nahdi, publisher of Q-News, the Muslim monthly magazine. "He shows there is life beyond beards, scarves and halal meat. He inspires confidence that you can build Islam in the west from all the local ingredients. You do not have to include political or theological burdens from traditional parts of the Muslim world."

Grainy videos of his sermons sell in their thousands and hint that he is not cut from the same cloth as teachers from the Indian sub-continent or Arabia. His goatee beard is almost fashionable. Sporting a turban plus an American accent, he is curiously familiar. Could he be that singer from

the Monkees, I wonder momentarily. However, in the flesh, his angular features, intellectual intensity and learned, didactic style recall another American icon: Malcolm X.

Yusuf has just arrived in Britain from Rome. Shaking my hand, he buzzes with excitement after attending an inter-faith procession for peace. “It was the feast of St Francis of Assisi,” he says. “It was such an ironic choice. Did you know St Francis persuaded the Pope to let Christians make a pilgrimage to Assisi instead of going on the crusades?”

We sit cross-legged on rugs on the floor of a suburban Buckinghamshire house. It is home to his old friends, white British converts to Islam. It is October but tea, delicious dried mangoes and dates are served in a room hot enough for a desert nomad.

The imam quickly turns to the World Trade Centre attack – an act of “mass murder, pure and simple”. Suicide, he says, is haram, prohibited by the Koran, as is the killing of innocent civilians. He quotes Koranic texts demonstrating that the suicide bombers do not qualify as martyrs. He even finds a verse outlawing flag-burning.

“Many Muslims seem to be in deep denial about what has happened,” he says. “They are coming up with different conspiracy theories and don’t entertain the real possibility that it was indeed Muslims who did this. Yet we do have people within our ranks who have reached that level of hatred and misguidance.”

Indeed, he sympathises with Margaret Thatcher’s statement that British Muslims have not been loud enough in condemnation. “There may be some truth in it,” he says. “Some Muslims tried to explain what has happened. But if you say you condemn something and then try to explain the background, it can mistakenly sound like a justification, as though this is their comeuppance.”

His hard-line attitude to extremists in Britain would be unsayable for any mainstream politician keen to retain any respectability. “I would say to them that if they are going to rant and rave about the west, they should emigrate to a Muslim country. The good will of these countries to immigrants must be recognised by Muslims.”

It is as though he has gone through a second, possibly more radical conversion than the first from Christianity. He regrets speeches he himself has made in the past, peppered as they were with the occasional angry statements about Jews and America that are a staple of much Muslim oratory. Days before the September 11 killings, he made a speech warning that “a great, great tribulation was coming” to America. He is sorry for saying that now.

“September 11 was a wake-up call to me,” he says. “I don’t want to contribute to the hate in any shape or form. I now regret in the past being silent about what I have heard in the Islamic discourse and being part of that with my own anger.”

His great concern is that Muslim thinking has sunk into theological shallowness that allows violent fundamentalists to fill the vacuum. Colonialism and successor powers, he contends, dismantled the great Islamic learning institutions, leaving a poverty of great scholarship.

“We Muslims have lost theologically sound understanding of our teaching,” he says. “We are living through a reformation, but without any theologians to guide us through it. Islam has been hijacked by a discourse of anger and the rhetoric of rage. We have lost our bearings because we have lost our theology.”

He has been examining the backgrounds of the extremists. The consistent feature, he says, is that they have been educated in the sciences rather than the humanities. “So they see things in very simplistic, black-and-white terms. They don’t understand the subtleties of the human soul that you get, for example, from poetry. Take the Iliad, for example. It is the ultimate text on war, yet you never know whether Homer is really on the side of the Greeks or the Trojans. It helps you understand the moral ambiguities of war.”

Yusuf’s language has a rare cultural fluency shifting easily between the Bible and the Koran, taking in, within a few breaths, Shakespeare, Thoreau, John Locke, Rousseau, Jesse James, Dirty Harry and even, at one point, the memoirs of General George Paton: “Did you realise,” he asks, “that Paton wrote in his diary on his first day in Morocco, ‘Just finished the Koran. A good book. Makes interesting reading.’ ”

We finish our tea. Another convert, Yusuf Islam, formerly the singer Cat Stevens, is waiting to speak to the new arrival. I suggest to Yusuf that life could get a lot tougher now he has broken ranks. "I will get a lot of flak from Muslim countries, because times are so emotional they are losing the ability to reason things through."

What about physical danger? "Yes, I think there is a real risk from ignorant people who have no respect for divergent opinions. There are Muslim fascists who are intellectually bankrupt. The only way they can argue is to eliminate the voices they don't agree with."

Jack O'Sullivan

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/Guardian-Article-If-you-hate-the-West-move-to-a-Muslim-Country#sthash.500yC8Qs.dpuf>

Transcript for FrontLine Interview

Transcript Details

Event Name: FrontLine Interview

Transcript Author: Frontline

Description: Editor`s Note: Transcribed by Frontline News on their website

Date Transcribed: 12/31/2007 12:00:00 AM

Original URL: http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/canada602/interview_yusuf.html

Transcript Text

FRONTLINE: Interview with Shaykh Hamza Yusuf

By Hamza Yusuf

FRONTLINE: This is an edited transcript of an interview that took place in September 2006.

Editor`s Note: Source is Unknown, found on the internet. May contain transcription errors

Q: Linden MacIntyre: What are the roots of Muslim rage?

A: Hamza Yusuf: If you had one word to describe the root of all this rage, it's humiliation. Arabs in particular are extremely proud people. If you look at what happened in Lebanon recently, the Arabs kind of raised their head-- they think it's a big victory, the fact that their whole country was destroyed and over a thousand people were killed, many of them children. Why is it a victory? Because they fought back. That's all. "OK, you can crush us into the Earth, but you're not going to get us to submit." And I think that's deeply rooted in Muslim consciousness, the idea of not submitting to anything other than God. "You can abuse me, but you're not going to win me over. But if you treat me with respect and dignity, I'm going to fall in love with you. I'm going to sing your praises all over the world because you're powerful and you treated me with human dignity."

Q: Where do they see the proof of the humiliation?

A: It's everywhere. You don't think it's humiliating to have a foreign force come into your land? You see, Muslims don't have this nation state idea. There's a tribe called Bani Tamin. It's one of the biggest tribes in Saudi Arabia and in Iraq, and they're intermarried. The West doesn't seem to

understand that. The Moroccans feel the Iraqi pain as their own. It's one pain. So when you see some American soldier banging down a door and coming into a house with all these women in utter fear who've done nothing, that's humiliation, and it's going to enrage people. And what are we doing there? There are no weapons of mass destruction. They were never a threat to us. You know, Shakespeare wrote a play called Julius Caesar, and it was all about the danger of pre-emptive strikes. Brutus is convinced by Cassius to kill Caesar. Why? Because Caesar's ambitious, because he might declare himself king. And the end of that play, everybody dies; it's just disaster. That's the tragedy of pre-emptive strikes.

Q: What goes through your mind when you hear about all these roundups of young Muslims who are supposedly plotting things in London and in Toronto?

A: We keep being told about these roundups, and in the end, they're more aspirational than operational. I'd love to have been in the meeting when they thought that one up. It seems to me that they're just a lot of bumbling fools out there.

Q: On which side of the equation?

A: On both sides. I mean, that's part of the problem. Violence is the last refuge of the incompetent, and I think that's really what we're dealing with here, incompetence. Both sides have been incredibly ineffective at achieving their goals-- at least their stated goals.

Q: I'm trying to get a measure of just how concerned people should really be though.

A: Listen, hurricanes are a much greater threat to us right now. Katrina did much more damage than anything the terrorists could ever put together. Yeah, there's nuclear weapons are out there and that certainly is a concern. That's the job of these intelligence people to stop that, right? But stop making us all live in fear and telling us about orange and red levels. All that nonsense just simply has to stop. We need to calm down and think at a deeper level. People can't think when their minds are clouded with fear. The fear tactic is a tactic that's used by people who want to maintain control, and it's very effective.

A democracy is predicated on an educated citizenry. You cannot have a democracy with people that are more interested in what Nicole Kidman is doing or whoever the latest fashion model is. If that's your interest, democracy can't survive. You also have corporate interests here. We have an arms industry in the West that is our No. 1 industry. It's bigger than anything-- automobiles, everything. Now if you don't have reasons to build weapons, where do all those contracts go?

Q: Your job is to recruit young people into a more constructive project.

A: Well, I'm not a recruiter

Q: You are definitely an influence.

A: I've got my own personal projects, like my school and my seminary. But at this point in my life, I'm actually just trying to put some balance out there because I feel that there's an incredible amount of disequilibrium in the way people are acting and the way they're thinking. There are irrational fears. If you see a woman wearing a hijab and fear is your first thought, something's really wrong. How do you racially profile terrorists when 90percent of the world falls into that? Mexicans look like Arabs, for God's sake, and anybody can change their name. I mean Abdullah can change his name to Eduardo. It's not going to be difficult, if they're clever. So how do you profile people?

Q: Six years ago, there were probably the same number of disenchanted young people in chat rooms and coffee houses complaining and plotting. But given the last five years, what are the chances now that it is going to become a more real and a more sinister force?

A: A major fear for me is that it will get worse with the profiling, with the alienation. I think especially for the young people and especially in the more underprivileged groups, but don't rule out the privileged as well. In the Communist period, the revolutionaries, the leaders were almost always-- Che Guevara, people like that-- they were always from the middle class and the educated. And empathy is a very powerful emotion. If you watch Al Manar Television in Lebanon, it's associated with Hezbollah. If you watch that for any length of time, you're going to get very angry. It's as simple as that. They show babies blown up, they show horrible scenes, and people see that and they get angry. There's always going to be a segment of angry people who are going to go out and do something.

Part of the real crisis of the modern age is that the individual has the power to do what pre-modern armies really couldn't even do. In the pre-modern world, you just couldn't do a lot of damage. In the modern world, you can. So we have real concerns. You have to go to a deeper level. Henry David Thoreau said for every thousand people hacking away at the branches of evil, there's only one person hacking away at the roots of evil. I really think we need to go to a deeper level and look at what the root of this situation is. There are a lot of people prevaricating out there, who just don't want to deal with the "why" question.

Q: It's become treasonous to talk about "why." So how do you get around that?

A: People need to know. It's the responsibility of the fifth estate-- the journalists. They need courage. I'm amazed at the courage of the journalists on the frontlines in Iraq, but we need intellectual courage in our community. We need to get rid of this hegemonic discourse that doesn't allow for any dissent, where people's jobs and careers are threatened by asking questions, because we have to ask questions.

Q: Well, let's start now. Why?

A: Why? We have a thousand years of cold war between the West and Islam. Let us not forget that the West in many ways defined itself, Europe defined itself vis-à-vis Islam. The Song of Roland is really one of the earliest pieces of Western literature, and it's about the antagonism with Muslims. So I think Islam has always been this nebulous "other" that we're afraid of, and that is part of our consciousness. The Crusades are also part of our consciousness. And the colonial period. But ultimately what you have is extremely repressive regimes. The reality is, almost all these Muslim governments are persecuting active Muslims, not terrorists. When you have very powerful secular tyrants, religion poses a very serious threat, and religion is a very powerful force in the Muslim world. So the repression of Islam, which has been going on for so long, has resulted in certain extreme views that have emerged within the religion. But you have to look at the reasons. Now we in the West have supported many of these regimes and see them as our interest. I personally don't think democracy is viable right now in the Muslim world. You need just governments, but you need strong governments. I think you can have situations that are not democratic but still are rooted in a concern about the people, the welfare of the people.

Q: How realistic is it to place hope on benevolent dictatorships?

A: I'm not talking so much about dictators. At this stage, you have to build democratic institutions, and in that way, the West can help. Look, we give \$1 billion in aid to Egypt. Do you know how much juice that is on the negotiating table, in terms of what you demand of Egypt? Because if you cut off that billion dollars, you're cutting off the lifeblood of the Egyptian government. America has an immense amount of power, but it doesn't use it in any benevolent way. It uses it to maintain a status quo. The same is true for almost all these Muslim countries.

Q: So what's your biggest challenge?

A: I have challenges in both worlds. I'm very active in the Muslim world. I have very popular television programs in the Muslim world, which have, I think, a very positive impact. So I'm working there. I go quite often to the Muslim world. And then I have my challenges here. I'm one person.

Q: But there are people in the Muslim world who think you're a heretic.

A: I think the majority of Muslims that know about me -- and there are quite a few in the Muslim world that do-- generally have a very good opinion of what I'm doing. I have rarely met belligerent Muslims. Every once in a while I'll come across somebody who's just got an axe to grind. But it's actually quite unusual for me. The majority of Muslims I meet, I see smiles on their faces. I get hugs. People tell me, "Keep up the good work." I really believe that most Muslims are very decent people. I've lived in the Muslim world. I'm always struck by their incredible generosity, by their simplicity, by their love of some really basic virtues and values

that I share and that most Western people share. This is my experience as a Western person, a convert to Islam.

Q: What was your experience after your speech the other night [at the Islamic Society of North America conference in Chicago], in which you talked about the fundamental humanity of people of the Jewish faith?

A: The Jewish situation's bad. I have to admit that. There is an immense amount of ignorance, particularly in the Muslim world. I think less so here, but we have that problem here also. There is an anti-Jewish sentiment. It's far more politically driven, and I think Muslims have forgotten, that's all. I think they need reminders, and I think when you remind them, they tend to respond, and that's been my experience. I was not raised as an anti-Semite. My sister converted to Judaism, is married to a Jewish man. I have nephews that are Jewish. I was not raised with any prejudice at all. But I was infected when I lived in the Muslim world. I lived in the Arab world for over 10 years, and I think I did get infected by that virus for a period of time. But I grew out of it and realized that not only does it have nothing to do with Islam, but it has nothing to do with my core values. And I've rejected that and called others to reject it. I think it's something that really needs to change in the Muslim community, and I think it will.

Q: What is your evaluation of the response of the last five years of the security apparatus, both as an American and as a Muslim?

A: Well, I think we've all become much more acutely aware of the state apparatus in terms of monitoring. I don't like the feeling that I have to think about what I say when I say things. It's not healthy, and I think a lot of people feel it now in a way that they've never felt it before, and that troubles me deeply about my country. I think that there needs to be a return to some real central values about this country. I think Guantanamo Bay is absolutely an unacceptable event in American history. It's going to be looked at as a really black period in our legal tradition.

Q: At what point does this more intense, heavy-handed security become counterproductive?

A: Personally, I think the intensified security has already become counterproductive. They need to do their job, but they don't need to do it constantly in our face. The intelligence community has a job to protect. The first principle of any government is to protect its citizens. But you also protect your citizens by being just to other countries and other peoples. You endanger your citizens by reckless behavior. You endanger your citizens by hubris. You endanger your citizens by the inability to actually apologize or to ask forgiveness for your mistakes. And that's something I find the most troubling about the whole situation, because I think real security is based on having benevolent policies.

Q: So what's your prescription?

A: My prescription is that we need to dismantle the pyramid of domination and we need to rebuild a house of mutual respect.

Q: Give me that in bread-and-butter terms.

A: In bread-and-butter terms, I truly believe that we need to stop being so paternalistic in our attitudes toward Muslims, toward other countries, and begin to actually speak to them as if they were human beings, fully enfranchised, with the dignity that goes with that. To stop drawing lines in the sand, to stop dictating to people as if you have some God-given authority to do that, and to really start trying to talk to people and see what you can do. I think we need commerce that is mutually beneficial and we need to stop all of this hegemonic commercial tyranny that goes on in the Middle East, in Central and South America. I mean people forget, you know, the South Americans probably hate us more than the Arabs do.

Q: How much more difficult has it become to achieve this kind of rationale?

A: We're at the lowest ebb right now. It's going to be very difficult to get back our credibility. In the recent war with Lebanon, it was so one-sided. If you watched Arab television and then CNN, it was like two different universes. That's really troubling to me because like the Chinese say, "There are three truths. There's my truth, your truth and then the truth." If I'm unwilling to let go of my truth and you're unwilling to let go of your truth, we cannot see objectively this truth that's in the middle, between us. There's good and bad in all of us, and I want to get rid of the cartoon scenario of George Bush's world and Osama bin Laden's world, and I want to see it nuanced. I want to see more intelligence here.

Q: We know from history that wars are generally fought by young men. What are you saying to these young people to prevent the sudden explosion of this sort of negative potential?

A: You have to give them hope. And there's something attractive about war to young men. They need to see war for what it is. If Robert E. Lee in the Civil War said war was hell, what would he make of 20th-century and 21st-century warfare? I think we have to see war as the despicable creature that it is and really work for peace. They say if you don't sweat for peace, then you bleed for war.

Q: But can you pull that off from inside Islam?

A: Muslims are peace-loving people generally. Among the young, yes, there are some militant attitudes. But a lot of it arises out of chivalry-- and don't underestimate the chivalrous impulse in men. A lot of these young men see women being-- you know-- they see soldiers breaking into houses with Muslim women. It's really beyond the pale for the average Muslim man, and

something rises up in them. And it can turn to deep resentment and rage. But generally I think the impulses are actually quite noble.

Q: So what do you say to the average person who sees some kind of a sinister threat under every hijab and behind every beard?

A: People have to be exposed to Muslims, just experience Muslims; talk to them. Reach out, read about Islam, try to find out about it. There are 20,000 Muslim physicians in the United States, Americans putting their lives in the hands of Muslims every day. You're going under and the anesthesiologist is a Muslim, right? He's looking out for you. He doesn't want you to die in that operation because you're an infidel. He's doing his job. As is your pediatrician who's trying to heal your child. And the mechanic who's fixing your car? He's not putting a bomb in your car. It's Abdullah, the guy down at the Chevron station, right? I mean it's one-fifth of the world's population for God's sake-- one out of five people is a Muslim.

Muslims have been an almost entirely benevolent force in the 20th century. They did not wreak the havoc the Western powers wreaked on the world. They have not come anywhere near to the environmental degradation that we've done to the planet. So I think Muslims need to be seen in the proper light. They're mostly decent, hardworking people, people with deep family values, and they want to live in peace. My experience on this planet, almost 50 years, is that if you treat people with respect, they tend to treat you with respect.

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/FrontLine-Interview#sthash.b1TIxPHX.dpuf>

Transcript for Foundations of the Sufi Path

Transcript Details

Event Name: Foundations of the Sufi Path

Transcript Author: Abu Isa

Description: Sh Hamza published this in a Seasons journal back in 2000. Great work that this was transcribed.

Date Transcribed: 9/30/2010 12:00:00 AM

Original URL: http://thefinalbrick.blogspot.com/2010_09_01_archive.html

The noble scholar, the unique of his age, the regulator of the scholars and the saints, Sidi Ahmad Zarruq al-Barnusi al-Fasi, may Allah be pleased with him, wrote the following:

If anyone is asked about the foundations of his path, he should reply,

The foundations of our path are five:

- Taqwa – mindfulness of Allah, privately and publicly
- Adherence to the Sunna in word and deed
- Indifference to whether others accept or reject one
- Contentment with Allah in times of both hardship and ease
- Turning to Allah in prosperity and adversity.

The realization of mindfulness of Allah is through scrupulousness and uprightness. The realization of adherence to the Sunnah is through caution and excellent character. The realization of indifference to others' acceptance or rejection is through patience and trust in Allah. The realization of contentment is through acceptance of what one is given and turning over the management of one's affairs to Allah. The realization of turning back to Allah is through praise and gratitude in times of prosperity and taking refuge in Him in times of affliction.

The foundations of the preceding five are in the following five:

- Exalted aspirations
- Maintaining Allah's reverence
- Expending oneself in excellent service of others
- Fulfilling one's resolves
- Magnifying one's blessings.

He whose aspirations are exalted is raised in rank. Allah maintains the respect of he who preserves His reverence. He whose service is for others is ennobled by it. He who does that which he resolves to do is assured continual guidance. He who deems blessings to be great by his own eye has shown gratitude. And he who is grateful ensures an increase in blessings from the Giver of gifts according to the promise of the Truthful One.

The foundations of right conduct are five:

- Seeking sacred knowledge in order to fulfill Allah's commands
- Keeping company with spiritual guides and the fraternity of aspirants to gain insight into one's faults
- Foregoing dispensations and interpretations concerning injunctions for one's own protection
- Organizing one's time with the remembrance of Allah to maintain presence of heart
- Suspecting the selfish soul (nafs) in everything in order to free oneself from its whimsical desires and to be safe from destructive circumstances.

The pitfall of seeking knowledge is the company of sophomoric people, whether due to their age, intellect, or deficient religious practice – in other words, those who do not refer to sound principles of guidance in their actions. The pitfall of keeping company with the spiritual guides and the fraternity is elitism, deception, and self-righteous meddling in the affairs of others. The pitfall of foregoing dispensations and interpretations concerning injunctions is self-pity due to hardships. The pitfall of organizing one's time with devotional works is ostentatious practice and ritualized perfunctory devotion.

The pitfall of constantly suspecting the selfish soul is inclining towards its upright states and goodness, yet Allah says, "Were he to offer every kind of compensation, it would not be accepted from him" (Quran 6:70).

Moreover, the noble son of the noble one, Joseph the son of Jacob, peace be upon them both, says, in the Quran, "I do not say the selfish soul was free from blame. The selfish soul indeed commands to evil acts – except for those on whom my Lord has mercy" (12:53).

The foundations of what will cure the sickness of the soul are five:

- Moderation achieved by lightening the stomach's intake of food and drink
- Taking refuge in Allah from harm when it actually occurs
- Vigilantly avoiding places where one fears misdeeds will occur
- Continually asking forgiveness of Allah coupled with devotional prayers upon the Prophet, peace be upon him, in both solitude and gatherings of people
- Keeping company with one who guides to Allah. Unfortunately, such a one no longer exists!

Abu Hasan Shadhili, may Allah be pleased with him, said, My beloved counseled me not to put my feet anywhere except where I hoped for Allah's reward, not to sit anywhere except where I was safe from disobedience to Allah, not to accompany anyone except someone in whom I could

find support in obedience to Allah, and not to select anyone for myself other than those who increased my certainty, and how rare they are to find! He also said, may Allah be pleased with him, Whoever directs you to this world has cheated you; whoever directs you to deeds has exhausted you; but whoever directs you to Allah has truly counseled you.

He also said, may Allah be pleased with him, Make piety (taqwa) your abode, and the delight of your selfish soul will do you no harm so long as it is discontent with its faults and does not persist in acts of disobedience nor abandons the awareness of Allah in solitude. I say that being content with the self, persisting in disobedient acts, and abandoning awareness of Allah are the foundations of all illnesses, tribulations, and pitfalls.

I have also seen that the seekers of this age are afflicted with five things:

- The preference of ignorance over Knowledge
- Being deluded by every spiritual impostor
- The inability to prioritize important matters
- Using the spiritual path as a means to inflate the selfish soul
- Attempting to expedite a spiritual opening without fulfilling its prerequisite conditions.

This has resulted in five other afflictions:

- Preferring innovations as opposed to the tried and true prophetic practice (Sunna)
- Following the people of claims and conceit as opposed to the truth
- Acting on capricious desires in all of their affairs, even the most celestial
- Preferring fantasies to realities
- The manifestation of claims without sincerity.

From these last five, five more have emanated:

- Obsessive compulsive thoughts in acts of devotion
- Laxity in matters of habitual practice
- Perfunctory devotional gatherings of invocation and chanting that lack inspiration
- Inclination toward people of rank and authority
- Companionship of those immersed in worldly matters, even mixing with the opposite sex and childish companions.

based upon far-fetched rationalizations they extrapolated from witnessing the like among real people of the path. They will even mention such people's states and stations as a justification. On the other hand, had they had true enlightenment, they would have understood that seeking one's provision is a dispensation for those lacking certainty, and that includes only the necessities of life without exceeding the necessary. Anyone lax in these matters is distant from Allah. As for devotional gatherings, they are permitted for people overpowered by their states or as a respite for people of excellent character. Indeed, such practice is akin to settling upon the carpet of truth if done in accordance with its requisite conditions among suitable people and in an appropriate

place, not to mention fulfilling its required courtesies and protocols.

Obsessive-compulsive thoughts arise from innovation, the basis of which is in ignorance of the prophetic practice or in some psychological affliction. Any propensity toward creation is by nature the lack of such toward the truth. This is especially so coming from an obsequious chanter, a heedless tyrant, or an ignorant sufi. The company of the immature is harmful, as well as a worldly and otherworldly shortcoming, and an acceptance of such company even worse. Shaykh Abu Madyan said, “‘The immature’ means anyone who is not in conformance with the spiritual path you are on, even if it were someone who reached ninety years of age.”

I say the immature are those who are not firmly rooted in principle; they accept things at face value and are impassioned by them. The vast majority of such people are those who are pretentious in their associations with a spiritual group and prefer conversations to real spiritual work. Avoid them to the utmost of your ability.

Anyone who claims to have a station with Allah while any of the following five happen to emanate from him is either a liar or deluded:

- Allowing any of his members to fall into sinful disobedience
 - Affectations in his devotional practice
 - Expectations from the creation
 - Backbiting against the people of Allah
- Lacking the proper respect for Muslims in accordance with the commands of Allah. Indeed, such people rarely die in a state of grace.

The qualifications of the spiritual guide with whom the seeker may safely entrust his self are the following five:

- Unadulterated spiritual experience
- Sound outward knowledge
- Celestial aspirations
- A pleasing state
- Penetrating inner perception.

Whoever has any of the following five cannot be a true spiritual guide:

- Ignorance of the religion
- Disregard for the reverence of other Muslims
- Engaging in matters of no concern to him
- Following his caprice in his affairs
- Unashamed displays of bad manners followed by lack of remorse.

The spiritual courtesies of a student with his or her spiritual guide and fellow wayfarers are also five:

- Following the directions of the guide, even if it is contrary to one's own preference
- Avoiding what the guide forbids, even if it would appear to be highly adverse to the student
- Maintaining utmost reverence for them in their presence and absence, during their lives and after their deaths
- Giving them their due according to one's ability without stint
- Relinquishing one's own understanding, knowledge, and leadership to that of the teacher, unless these are already in accordance with one's teacher.

Should the seeker not find a guiding teacher or find one who is lacking in any of these five conditions, he should depend on him only in those conditions the teacher fulfills. As for areas he is wanting in, he should treat him like a brother regarding them. Thus ends the five foundations with the praise, help, and perfect success of Allah.

It is necessary to read this every day, once or twice, and if that is not possible, then at least once a week until its meanings are imprinted on one's soul and manifest in one's behavior. Indeed, it contains that which enables one to dispense with many books and much advice, and it is said, "Surely they have been denied arrival by their neglect of the foundations." Whoever reflects deeply on what we have said will acknowledge its truth, and he will continue to have recourse to it, using it as a reminder for him.

Success is ultimately by Allah.

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/Foundations-of-the-Sufi-Path#sthash.KdTYzdyT.dpuf>

Transcript for Fatwa on Following a Madhab

Transcript Details

Event Name: Fatwa on Following a Madhab

Transcript Author: Sheikh Hamza Yusuf

Description:

Date Transcribed: 1/1/2000 12:00:00 AM

Original URL:

Transcript Text

**Shaykh Murabtal Haaj's Fatwa on Following
One of the Four Accepted Madhhabs
By Murabtal Haaj, Mauritania,**

Translated by Hamza Yusuf Hanson

Copied from the book of the same name

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

Amongst the most important replies that I have given, is my reply concerning the one who has deviated to the point where he censures the importance of studying the branches [*furu'*] of jurisprudence, and we seek refuge in Allah from the deviation of such a wandering deviant. Would that he simply had claimed independent reasoning (*ijtihad*) for himself only, and Allah is his reckoner, but abandoned the call of Muslims to leave that which is incumbent upon them. In our reply to such a one, we make mention what the scholars of the methodological bases of Islamic jurisprudence (*usuli'un*) and the Imams of jurisprudence themselves have said about such a matter. As for my labelling him a deviant, it is only because he has desired to impose upon common people the precious rank of absolute independent reasoning [*ijtihad*], about which Muhammad an-Nabigha said,

And *ijtihad* in the land of the Moroccans, The western phoenix has taken to flight with it.

I say in reply, that the following of qualified scholarship (*taqlid*) is an obligation on anyone other than an absolute *mujtahid*. I shall make mention of all his prerequisites if Allah wills. [Sidi Abdullah Ould Hajj Ibrahim] has said in his *Maraq'i as-Sa'ud*: “[*taqlid*] is necessary for

other than the one who has achieved the rank of absolute *ijtihad*. Even if he is a limited [*mujtahid*] who is unable [to perform absolute *ijtihad*].”

Commenting on this line, [Sidi Abdullah] said in *Nashru al-bunud*, “It means that *taqlid* is an obligation on anyone who is not an absolute *mujtahid*, even if he has achieved the limited rank of *ijtihad muqayyad* . . . [until he says], ‘And ask the people of the reminder, if you yourselves do not know.’”

By using the line of Muhammad an-Nabigha above, I am in no way claiming that all *ijtihad* has been severed in every land; how [could I say such a thing] when [Sidi Abdullah] says in *Maraqī as-sa’ud*: “The earth will never be void of a *mujtahid* scholar until its very foundations shake.” He also said, “[Regarding] the necessity of binding to a specific *madhhab*, the [scholars] have mentioned its obligation upon anyone falling short [of the conditions of *ijtihad*].” He says in *Nashru al-bunud*, “It means that it is incumbent for whoever falls short of achieving the rank of absolute *ijtihad* to follow a particular *madhhab*.”

Again, in *Maraqī as-Sa’ud*, Sidi Abdullah says, “The consensus today is on the four, and all have prohibited following [any] others.”

He says in *Nashru al-bunud*, “This means that the consensus of the scholars today is on the four schools of thought, and I mean by the schools of Malik, Abu Hanifa, Shafi’i and Ahmad. Indeed, all of the scholars have prohibited following any other school of an independent and absolute *mujtahid* since the eighth century when the school of Dawud adh-Dhahiri died out and until the 12th Century and all subsequent ones.”

In the chapter concerning inferential reasoning, from *Maraqī as-sa’ud*, [Sidi Abdullah] says, “As for the one who is not a *mujtahid*, then basing his actions on primary textual evidence [Qur’an and hadith] is not permissible.”

He says in *Nashru al-bunud*, “It means that it is prohibited for other than a *mujtahid* to base his actions upon a direct text from either the Book or the Sunna even if its transmission was sound because of the sheer likelihood of there being other considerations such as abrogation, limitations, specificity to certain situations, and other such matters that none but the *mujtahid* fully comprehends with precision. Thus, nothing can save him from Allah the Exalted excepted following a *mujtahid*. Imam al-Qarafi

I says, ‘And beware of doing what some students do when they reason directly from the hadith, and yet they don’t know their soundness, let alone what has been mentioned [by the Imams]

concerning the subtleties involved in them; by doing this, they went astray and led others astray. And whoever interprets a verse or hadith in a manner that deviates from its intended meaning without proof [*dalil*] is a *kafir*.”

As for the conditions of the absolute and independent *ijtihad*, they are mentioned in the *Maraqī as-sa’ud* in the following line and what follows: “And that [word ‘*faqih*’²] is synonymous with the [word] ‘*mujtahid*’ coupled with those things which bear upon [him] the burden of responsibility, Such as his being of extreme intelligence by nature, and there is some debate about one who is known to reject juristic analogy [*qiyas*]. He knows the [juristic] responsibilities through intellectual proofs unless a clear transmitted proof indicates otherwise. [Sidi Abdullah] says [in his commentary] *Nashru al-bunud*, “This means that among the conditions of *ijtihad* is that [the *mujtahid*] knows that he must adhere to the intellectual proof which is the foundational condition [*al-bara’atu al-asliyya*³] until a transmitted proof from a sacred law indicates otherwise.” He then goes on to mention the other conditions of a *mujtahid*: [The sciences of] grammar, prosody, philology, combined with those of *usul* and rhetoric he must master.

According to the people of precision, [he must know] where the judgements can be found without the condition of having memorized the actual texts. [All of the above must be known] according to a middle ranked mastery at least. He must also know those matters upon which there is consensus. [Moreover, he must know] things such as the condition of single hadiths and what carries the authority of great numbers of transmissions; also [knowledge of] what is sound and what is weak is necessary.

Furthermore, what has been abrogated and what abrogates, as well as the conditions under which a verse was revealed or a hadith was transmitted is a condition that must be met. The states of the narrators and the companions [must also be known]. Therefore, you may follow anyone who fulfils these conditions mentioned above according to the soundest opinion. So, consider all of the above-mentioned, and may Allah have mercy upon you, and [may you] see for yourself whether your companion is characterized by such qualities and fulfils these

conditions—and I highly doubt it. More likely, he is just pointing people to himself in his demands that the people of this age take their judgements directly from the Book and Sunna. If, on the other hand, he does not possess the necessary conditions, then further discussion is useless.

In Muhammad ‘Illish’s, *Fath al-‘Ali al-Malik*, there are many strong rebukes for those who wish to force people to abandon the study of the judicial branches and take directly from the Book and the Sunna. The actual text of the question put to him is as follows: “What do you say about someone who was following one of the four Imams, may Allah the Exalted be pleased with them, and then left claiming that he could derive his judgements directly from the Qur’an and the soundly transmitted hadiths, thus leaving the books of jurisprudence and inclining towards the view of Ahmad bin Idris? Moreover, he says to the one who clings to the speech of the Imams and their followers, “I say to you ‘Allah and His Messenger say’, and you reply ‘Malik said’ and ‘Ibn al-Qasim said’ or ‘Khalil said.’”

To this, Imam ‘Illish replies:

“My answer to this all this is as follows: Praise be to Allah, and Prayer and Safety be upon our Master Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah. It is not permissible for a common person to abandon following the four Imams and take directly from the textual sources of the Qur’an and the hadiths for the simple reason that this entails a great many conditions that have been clarified in the books of *usul*. Moreover, these conditions are rarely met by the great scholars, especially in these last days in which Islam has become a stranger just as it began a stranger.” Ibn ‘Uyyana, may Allah be pleased with him, has said, “The hadiths are a source of error except for the jurists.”

What he means is that people, other than the scholars, might interpret a tradition based on an apparent meaning, and yet [the hadith may] have another interpretation based on some other hadith that clarifies the meaning or some proof that remains hidden [to the common people]. After a long discussion, he remarks, “That as for their saying, ‘How can you leave clear Qur’anic verses and sound hadiths and follow the Imams in their ijtihads, which have a clear probability of error,’”

His answer to them is as follows:

“Surely the following of our [rightly guided] Imams is not abandoning the Qur’anic verses or the sound hadiths; it is the very essence of adhering to them and taking our judgements from them. This is because the Qur’an has not come down to us except by means of these very Imams [who are more worthy of following] by virtue of being more knowledgeable than us in [the sciences of] the abrogating and abrogated, the absolute and the conditional, the equivocal and the clarifying, the probabilistic and the plain, the circumstances surrounding revelation and their various meanings, as well as their possible interpretations and various linguistic and philological considerations, [not to mention] the various other ancillary sciences [involved in understanding the Qur’an] needed.

“Also, they took all of that from the students of the companions (*tabi’in*) who received their instruction from the companions themselves, who received their instructions from the Lawgiver himself, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, divinely protected from every mistake, who bore witness that the first three generations of Muslims would be ones of virtue and righteousness. Furthermore, the prophetic traditions have also reached us through their means given that they were also more knowledgeable than us through their means given that they were also more knowledgeable than those who came after them concerning the rigorously authenticated (*sahih*), the well authenticated (*hasan*), and the weak (*da’if*) channels of transmission, as well as the *marfu’u*⁴, *mursal*⁵, *mutawatir*⁶, *ahad*⁷, *mu’dal*⁸ and *gharib*⁹ transmissions.

“Thus, as far as this little band of men is concerned, there is only one of two possibilities: either they are attributing ignorance to Imams whose knowledge is considered by consensus to have reached human perfection as witnessed in several traditions of the truthful Lawgiver, upon him be prayers and peace, or they are actually attributing misguidance and lack of *din* to Imams who are all from the best of generations by the testimony of the magnificent Messenger himself, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Surely, it is not the eyes that are blind, but blind are the hearts in our breasts.

As for their saying to the one who imitates Malik, for example, “We say to you ‘Allah says’ or ‘the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, says’ and you reply,

‘Malik says’, or ‘Ibn al-Qasim says’, or ‘Khalil says’, for example,” our response is that the follower who says, “Malik says . . . etc.,” means that, “Malik says based on his deep understanding of the Word of Allah, or of the words of the Messenger, or of those firmly adhering to the actions of the companions, or of the *tabi’in* who understood clearly the Word of Allah and the word of the Messenger of Allah or took their example from the actions of His Messenger.” And the meaning of [a follower] saying “Ibn al-Qasim said . . .” is that he has [faithfully] transmitted what Malik said based on his understanding of the Word of Allah or of what Ibn al-Qasim himself understood from the word of Allah the Most Exalted. And the meaning of him saying, “Khalil said . . .”, for example, is that he is transmitting only from those [Imams] aforementioned. As for Malik and Ibn al-Qasim, they are both Imams whose spiritual and judicial authority is agreed upon by unanimous consensus of this Umma; and they are both from the best of generations.

As for the one who leaves their leadership and says, “Allah said and His Messenger said . . .,” he has relied solely on his own understanding despite the fact that he is incapable of having any precision in the verses and hadiths that he quotes since he is unable even to provide chains of transmission [with any authority], let alone that he lacks knowledge concerning the abrogated, the absolute and the conditional, the ambiguous and the clarifying, the apparent and the textual, the general and the specific, the dimensions of the Arabic and the cause for revelation, the various linguistic considerations, and other various ancillary sciences needed. So, consider for yourself which is preferable: the word of a follower who simply quotes the understanding of Malik, an Imam by consensus—or the word of this ignoramus who said “Allah said and His Messenger said . . .” But it is not the sight that goes blind, but rather the hearts in our breasts. Furthermore, know that the origin of this deviation is from the *Dhahiriyya*¹⁰ who appeared in Andalusia [Muslim Spain] and whose power waxed from a period until Allah obliterated all traces of them until this little band of men set about to revive their beliefs. Imam al-Barzuli said, “The first one ever to attack the *Mudawwana*¹¹ was Sa’id bin al-Haddad .” If you consider carefully the above-mentioned texts, you will realize that the one who censures you from following [the Imams] is truly a deviant. And I am using the word “deviant” to describe them only because the scholars [before me] have labelled this little band and their view (*madhhab*) as deviant. Moreover, you should know that those who condemn your adherence to the Imams have been fully refuted by Muhammad al-Khadir bin Mayyaba with the most piercing of refutations, and he himself called them, in his book, “the people of deviation and heterodoxy.” He called his book, Refuting the people of deviation of heterodoxy who attack the following [*taqlid*] of the Imams of independent reasoning, and I used to have a copy but no

longer do. So, my brother, I seriously warn you from following the madhhab of these people and even from sitting in their company, unless there is an absolute necessity, and certainly from listening to anything they have to say, because the scholars have declared their ideas deviant. Ibn al-Hajj says in his book, *al-Madkhal*, “Umar ibn al-‘Aziz said, ‘Never give one whose heart is deviant access to your two ears, for surely you never know what may find fixity in you.’” I ask Allah to make you and me from those who listen to matters and follow the best of them.

Footnotes

1. **Ahmad ibn Idris Shihabudin as-Sanhaji al-Qarafi al-Maliki** was born in Egypt in the seventh Century, and died there in the year 684. He was one of the greatest Maliki scholars who ever lived and is especially known for his work in methodology and law (*usul al-fiqh*). He was a master of the Arabic language and has remarkable works in grammar. His book *adh-Dhakhira* is a magisterial 14 volume work recently published in the Emirates, that looks at Maliki *fiqh* with proofs from *usuli* sources. He is buried in Qarafi in Egypt near Imam as-Shafi’i. May Allah have mercy on them both.
2. **Sidi Abdullah says in his commentary** on this line that the *faqih* is synonymous with *mujtahid* in the science of *usul*. There are different types of *faqih*. A *faqih* according to the scholars of *usul* is anyone who has achieved the rank of *ijtihad*. According to the scholars of *furu’u*, a *faqih* is anyone who has reached the level of knowledge in which he can give valid juristic opinion. This latter definition is important considering endowments that are given to *fuqaha*. See *Nashur al-bunud `ala maraqi as-sa’ud, kitab al-ijtihad fi al-furu’u* (1409 Hijrah. Beirut: Maktabat al-Kutub. p.309)
3. **The foundational condition** is that a human being is not asked by Allah to do anything other than those things which have a firm proof through the transmission of the prophets, peace be upon them, and that the human being is only accountable for those things in which there is clear responsibility. All other matters are considered permissible because of the lack of a proof indicating their impermissibility.
4. **The transmission (*sanad*)** goes to the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) the hadith came from the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace).
5. **A *tabi’i* related it** from the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace); a companion (*sahabah*) is missing from the line of the transmission.

6. **The hadith comes from** so many sources that it is an absolute proof.
7. **A hadith**, that at some point in the line of transmission, has only one narrator.
8. **Two people in a row** are missing in the chain of narrators.
9. **The narrator of the hadith** is trustworthy, but no one else related the hadith.
10. **The Dhahiriyya** followed Daw'ud ad-Dhahiri's madhhab.
11. **Mudawwana**: Imam Malik's work of *fiqh*.

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/Fatwa-on-Following-a-Madhab#sthash.I1GMnw1R.dpuf>

Transcript for Families and Individuals

Transcript Details

Event Name: Families and Individuals

Transcript Author: Munawar Ali

Description:

Date Transcribed: 1/1/2006 12:00:00 AM

Original URL: None

Transcript Text

Moderator>

SHEIKH HAMZA Yusuf 0:50>

<Greetings in Arabic>

<Basmallah in Arabic>

<Salaat un Nabi in Arabic>

In the program, this topic is how to become a better human being, and it has a period, and I was thinking about, myself talking about that.

And I thought, I should put a question mark at the end, instead of a period, because I think I'm going to ask more questions, I think then maybe perhaps, provide answer.

But one thing that we should note, is that the Quran is a book that contains quite a few questions, it's a book that, in fact, demands that human beings think. Because the nature of a question is to open the mind to reflection.

So questions are an important aspect of the human nature, and the human condition. And one of the questions that first comes to mind, is 'what is a human being?' We should ask that question.

Some of them would contend that a human being is more akin to the phoenix of the West, or the unicorn... a legendary creature that is talked about, but never actually seen.

The Quran in fact would contest that you, and indicates in the Quran that in fact, there are human beings, Allah Subhanawatallah when he gives one of the reasons why he created human beings in the first place, <Arabic>, that I'm going to place in the Earth a Calipha, and this itiklaf is

considered one of the reasons why the human being was created in the first place. That Allah Subhanawatallah would put in the Earth the one that would be a caretaker over the Earth.

Now, the Angels because they had seen, according to Imam Razi, Fakiruddin Ur-Razi, they had seen what the jinn had done, when they were on the Earth, because the presence of the Jinn on the Earth, preceded the presence of the Human Being, they uh, they asked Allah Subhanawatallah, “are you going to put one on the Earth”, <Arabic> that will sow corruption, <Arabic> and they will spill blood.

And the angels in fact were saying, that it’s more appropriate that we should be put on to the Earth as a calipha, because we’ll do a better job, then these human beings. And Allah Subhanawatallah said something that all of us should ponder, <Arabic> I know what you don’t know.

And Allah Subhanawatallah said this, he was indicating that there was an element in the human nature, that was hidden from the exterior appearance of the human being. And this is the element of the, Okrawi element, or the other worldly element; The angelic element. It is because it is uniquely mans position in the Earth, that he was created as an interstate, between the two worlds. In other words, it is the angelic realm that is made for the <Arabic> or the highest place, the unseen world, the “Ghaib”, they don’t disobey Allah Subhanawatallah. Yet it is the human being that has the capacity to possess, these two elements, which are called the <Arabic>.

Allah Subhanawatallah says in the Quran about the first, <Arabic>, You understood the first <Arabic>, which is this <Arabic> we are in now. This first creation. Then Allah Subhanawatallah reminds us in another place in the Quran, <Arabic> then Allah will give you a 2nd <Arabic>.

So, this human being has these two creations. One is this world’s wordily creation, and the other is the next worlds creation. It is the Ruh and the Body which has been united in the body, which is called Bani Adam or the Insaan, the human being. And this uniting of the two forse, these two forces, the higher and the lower forces. Allah Subhanawatallah placed in the human being the ability to be a, a control, or a bridge between these two elements, so that they function harmoniously not in antagonous to one another, and that element is called the intellect. And so the Human being is called according to the Muslim scholars <Arabic>, The articulating animal. And this articulation is what distinguishes us from the rest of the animalskingdom, and puts us in the angelic realm. Because the angels, although they have the capacity to articulate, So Allah Subhanawatallah when he says, <Arabic>, The Merciful who has revealed the Quran, has taught the Quran, created the human being, then has given him the vehicle by which he can obtain the knowledge that is in the Quran. In other words he gave him the intellect, which will allow him to absorb the Quran. Because the Quran is an articulation, it’s Qalaamullah, it is the speech of Allah Subhanawatallah. So this human being has the ability to understand speech. And Allah Subhanawatallah has spoken to the human being. Now if you look at the nature, are nature, this lower nature, which is filled with what is calledhawa, and this shawat. This is the passion and the shahwaat.

Shawaat is this thing that pulls us down, and hawa by its nature is a downward it's a descent. <Arabic> By the Star when it descends, so hawa, is a movement down, it is a downward motion. And this is called <Darakaat> in the Quran. <Darakaat > is a downward motion. And the fire is towards the downward motion. This is metaphysics, we don't, you can't look at this quite literally, we're in the metaphysical world. There's a downward motion. This is why the Munafiq are in the lowest <Darak> of the fire.

Now Janaat is dharajat, and the dhuraj is a ladder, which takes effort to climb up. Now here Allah is indicating in the vocabulary of the Quran, that there is a dual tension. There is a dual nature here. One is an upward motion, which is the motion of the intellect, because the intellect is the highest point on the human being.

If you look at the organs, the intellect is the highest organ. The lowest organ is the Fard, because everything below the private parts, there are already examples of it above the private parts. In other words, muscle, and bone, and these things. So the lowest organ is the private parts.

Now look at these private part, it's an amazing thing because we share it with the human being, the animals. Now the animal has the same organs, animals can, in fact they are better at it, if we think that somehow we are, that it's uniquely human, the animals are better at that then the human. I mean, A Cock has 40 or 50 hens. You see. The human begin, this isn't possible. The human being does not have a monopoly on that aspect of nature. You see other animals have it, and their better at it then human beings. And this is why there are people that take that as their deen. Because The Prophet Muhammad (S) said <Arabic>, the one addicted to fornication is like the worshipper of an idol.

So there are people that worship it. Now what has Allah done, just to remind us of the nature of that organ. He has put the <> on that organ. We are circumcised to be a reminder throughout our lives, that we have an oath with Allah Subhanawatallah we will not become slaves to that lower part of ourselves. We will not become slaves to that lower part of ourselves. If there is a section of it that is cutoff from the human being . To indicate there is a purification, an obedience, to the animal nature, the bestial nature of the human being. Now this shaitaan literally, this is one of his easiest inroads into the human being. One of his inroads, is to come through these shahwaat, these passions.

So this <Arabic> that is moving down, is literally obviated or blocked, by this intellect that is moving up. Now the intellect is given massive facilities. I mean if you look at the brain itself, it's estimated that in the heuristic sciences, that there are more brain cells then there are stars in the universe. Allah has given this human brain, massive capacity. In most estimates, we use less than .1% of the brain. The total brain mass, less then .1%. There are people hydrosefatalic people, people with water on the brain, given less than 5% of the total neocortex, which is the new brain mass. Yet they graduate from universities with honors. You see, this is a fact of life. There are people that have less than 5% of our neocortex, the brain mass, and they do fine. You see, so the brain has massive potential. But that potential needs to be harnessed by the human being. But Allah Subhanawatallah has put within this brain. And this is what modern neuropsychological research is revealing, that the human brain has an extraordinary capacity at self deception. Now In many ways, the self deception is essential. The first great self- deception is that you will not die. This is the first great self deception, which is the human begin will not die. Now this state

of believing you are immortal is important for the first phase of life. In other words, for the child to grow, for the child to experience the world, the child in a sense has to be fearless, intrepid.

If the child realizes, how dangerous it was, to get up in the morning and to walk around, it would stay in bed. But it doesn't realize that, it believes in a self deluded sense that it is invulnerable. So what you will see with the child as it is coming into its body, it begins to become aware of its limitations, its bodily limitations. The child will touch fire and get burnt. And this is a lesson for the intellect. It is imprinted at the cellular level. The child will bruise itself and will fall...children at an early age will jump off anything, but then they learn quickly that no, there are limitations, So this is a movement from this deluded sense of the brain that doesn't know limits into the state of understanding there are human limits. There are limits. Now this is the first, this is the perquisite to understanding the limits of Allah Just as there are physical limits to the human begin; There are also moral limits to the human being and if they are transgressed, then things will happen to them as if those physical limits are transgressed, things will happen to them. This is the nature of the world we're living in, it is a world of limitations. Now one of the things you will note is the motif of the age we're living in, You see, they'll put a person on top of mount Everest, they'll have a Nike Commercial, "Just Do it". In other words, just go beyond the limits , in fact that's an ad campaign, just break the limits. And there's an ad campaign for one of these commercials. So this is the idea of, break those boundaries, go on do it. And this is exactly what the shaitaan wants you to do, he wants to fool you in to breaking your limitations, as well as your morale and spiritual limitations and this is part of his game, to bring us down, Shaitaan is down. And the amazing thing about it is, what shaitaan complained about, he said <Arabic >, you created me from fire, which is high, it's a rising element, and you created him from mud and water which is low, it's a lowering element. This is in the outward level. The inward level is the secret that things lie within opposites

That by the fact the human is low and humbled, It is raised up high and exalted by Allah Subhanawatallah <Arabic>, the one who is humiliated and debased for Allah's sake, Allah will raises him up. And the one who <Arabic>, And the one who becomes arrogant and high and exalted, Allah will abase him on the Earth < Arabic>, the one who becomes a tyrant or an oppressor, Allah will destroy him, will abase him and this is the nature, this is the Sunnah in his creation. Because Allah has Sunnah, which are spiritual and moral just as there are Sunnan, there are physical laws. And this is part of understanding what we are, as a human being, what is Bani Adam.

Now if we look into , more into this human nature, the human being has these two, but then he has these two other things called <Arabic>, the two joys.

The first joy is the joy of this world, Allah Subhanawatallah says <Arabic>, remember my naimah that I have given you. And there is a sadaah, in this world, a type of joy in living in this world with the blessings of Allah has bestowed upon human beings. And the one who is in a reflective mode, will recognize that no matter how difficult his life becomes, he is in Naam.

See Allah says, <Arabic> If you will begin to count the blessings of Allah, you will never reach its end. They are unlimited. Ibn Abbas RA said "Any tribulation you are in, it could be worse, and that in itself is a naamah. That you should make gratitude to Allah for. If you look at our Bosnian brothers and sisters, That was a great tribulation that came upon our

brothers and sisters. But Allah Subhanawatallah brought many of them back to the deen through that tribulation. They came back to the deen. They had to learn the prayer. You see, they had to learn the prayer. They haven't been praying for a long long time. And they have to learn the prayer. Now it was a majestic and powerful way of learning the prayer, but they learned the prayer. They went back to the prayer. And this is the nature of Allah's majesty. Because we are either witnessing the Beauty of Allah or The Majesty, and both of them <Arabic>, these are both namaat's, Allah's majesty and Allah's beauty. He is <Arabic>, So the human being, is the one who enters into the witnessing of Majesty and Beauty of Allah. Either Al-Qadir or Al-Batiin, and for the mumin he's the one that sees Allah in both states.

The Kaafir and the Munafiq, only sees Allah in the state of beauty. They don't see Allah in the state of majesty. And this is why, if Allah gives us things, they say, <Arabic> "Allah loves me, God Loves me", you see. We're #1. Some people think that, God Bless America. Because they have a lot of bounties. Well, Allah says, <Arabic> We will take them by degrees. What does that mean to be taken by degrees? It means Allah will give people great gifts, and they won't give gratitude to Allah and he will increase them in their gifts, and they will become deluded, they will enter a self-deluded state, thinking that the increase in their blessings is in fact a sign that Allah loves them. And all they are seeing is the beauty of Allah Subhanawatallah, and hidden behind it, is the majesty of Allah Subhanawatallah, <Arabic> "He's the first and the last, & he's the outwardly manifest, and he's the inwardly hidden." So don't be deluded by the dual attributes that Allah Subhanawatallah possesses. These attributes, when seen on the outward seem opposites, in fact they are one, and so we witness Allah because we are Muhadoon, we say <Arabic>, and we see the oneness in Allah his majesty and his beauty. So the human being, this extraordinary creature. If you look, in the world right now, Allah SW says, <Arabic> "From his signs he created you from dust", <Arabic>, "And look your human beings" <Arabic> "Look anywhere, spread out on Earth"

Now there are two types, because Allah Subhanawatallah has two types, the Angelic contention that we will spread corruption on the Earth. But Allah SW says <Arabic> so from amongst these creatures there are 3, natures.

From amongst the creatures there are 3 natures. The first nature is called <Nafs al-Lawama> The Bani Adam has 3 natures. The first nature is called <Nafs al-Amara> <Arabic> My nafs commands to evil. This is the first nature of the human being.

Now if you watch the child after its beautiful state of fitra. Which is the first year of life you'll see absolute submission. Absolute and noble submission. But as the child begins to enter into the egocentric stage, the state of the Nafs al-Amara, when all it sees is self. It becomes the little emperor. And the parents are the servants, they become the slave of the infant. When it enters that stage, it only knows "Nafsi Nafsi". And we have to teach it, "No there are other people in this world, beside you little boy or little girl".

This is what the parent has to impart to the child, and it's a difficult lesson, and many parents fail to learn it. Many people will spend their entire lives in that infantile, egocentric state, in which

they will simply say “nafsi nafsi”. I’m all that exists, and the world is here to serve me. And this is a sickened diseased state for the adult. For the child, it’s a wonderful state of life, you see. We laugh at it, it’s not funny when they’re Thirty seven years old and they’re still playing the same game. But when they’re little children, it’s cute, it’s beautiful. Because they are <Arabic> they have no <Arabic>. They have no responsibility. And this is a state Allah has created in them for a wisdom, for a reason. So this <Nafs al-Amara> Is this nafs that says, “Do it do it”, do it for you.

Now If we look, we’ll see that this is shaytaan’s game again. The modern world is a world of the self. Everything you see out there is calling to the self. Whispering constantly. You’re number 1, you’re the most important thing in this world. Go for all the gusto, you only go around once, you only live once, do onto others, before they do onto you. Right.

This is Shaytan, these are his whisperings into the hearts of human beings. If you don’t get him he’s gonna get yet. And this is what the modern corporate mentality is, it’s a dog eat dog world. You see, and the Dog, this is what Sayeedna Isa in a Muslim tradition said, <Arabic>, The world is like a dead carcass, and its people are like dogs around it. There was an advertisement that I saw in a magazine, and it was an advertisement on how to be a more ruthless business man. And it had a bunch of wolves.

That was the advertisement. I’m not making this stuff up. It had a bunch of wolves, and it said, “Learn how to work in a pack”.

You see, In other words, in a corporate team, you can eat more people. And Then it said, “Good for lone wolves Too”. You see, so they’re already telling you what they think of you. You’re a predatory animal, You’re a predatory animal. Now Allah Subhanawatallah gives a different picture of a human being.

Side 2 of 2

“I know what you don’t know.” What is the thing that Allah knows that the Angels didn’t know? That the human being has a Rua, that he is a Baatani creature as well as a Zhari.

That he’s not simply body. That he’s not simply hawa and shahwaat. That he’s not simply a <passive> Bestial nature that calls for him to sow corruption in the Earth. He’s not simply a Nafs al Amara, he’s a Nafs al Lawama. This is the next state.

Now Nafs al Amara is the movement into a cognitive faculty that recognizes right from wrong. Abd this is part of the socialization that is needed from the parents and the society to

teach the child. And you'll find that societies are 4 in nature. 4 in Nature. There are societies in which the parent and the society are conducive to the natural fitra of the child. And this is the ideal society for the child. And this is what we call Medina Munawara any model that follows after it. Like the great Islam and Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio in Africa. Or the Islam of Amir Abdul Qadir Gilani, or the Islam of Salahuddin Ayubi.

When they were just and rightly guided leaders, The Prophet said Allah Subhanawatallah his sultan in the Earth is <Arabic> That the just ruler is the King of Allah. In which this human creation is safe from the sum of oppression, from the heat of oppression.

This is why, when one goes out on the authority of the Sultan, has left the <Arabic> of Islam. He's outside of Islam. He's become a Qariji. He is someone who has rebelled against the authority of Allah Subhanawatallah and his messenger. So if you look then at this Allah Subhanawatallah this <Arabic> this mechanism that Allah Subhanawatallah placed in the human being. It is the recognition of right and wrong. But Allah Subhanawatallah says that there are some <Arabic>, They mix good actions with wrong actions. <Arabic>, But Allah will forgive them, will give Taubah to them if they make Taubah to Allah Subhanawatallah.

So there are those that are in this middle state. And Allah Subhanawatallah says about the people who were given the book, <Arabic> There are those who are oppressive to themselves, <Arabic>, And there are those who are in the middle, <Arabic>, And there are those who are outstrippers in good. By the permission of Allah.

Ibn Abd Dharr, the great Hafiz of Maghrib said, Allah began with the <Arabic>, those that oppress themselves in order for them not to despair, <Arabic> do not despair of the Mercy of their lord. Then he took the middle people, the Muktasib, because these people are a bridge, in other words, from <Arabic> you have to move to the Muktasib. Then he ended with <Arabic> By the permission of Allah, and this is called <Arabic> to witness the <Arabic> to witness the gift of Allah, the Tawfeeq, that Allah has given you success in the worship of Allah, so you don't become deluded so that you don't become arrogant, and don't become self righteous, and don't become filled with pride and puffed up.

Because this is what you will enter in this direction, he sees that he can't take you out of your obedience he will enter in with pride. And Allah Subhanawatallah does not allow the heart with Kibr into his Jannah.

Because Jannah is for those that are low and humbled in the Earth. <Arabic>, Those servants of the Merciful, because Rahmat is a humbling quality. To have mercy on people is a humbling. Because it's not mercy to forgive somebody who has no ability to punish them. That's just the status quo, Right, that's just status quo. <Arabic> in the Arabic language means you have the ability to punish them yet you forgive them. That is the mercy that humbles you. That's the quality that lowers you, that makes you humble. And That's the quality that enters you into Jannat. <Arabic>, Have mercy on the Earth, and the one in the heavens will have mercy on you.

Allah Subhanawatallah, He will have mercy on those that show mercy. Show no mercy and Allah shows no mercy. <Arabic> Because Allah gives rewards in accordance to their actions. <Arabic> The reward is in accordance to the action itself.

So this Nafs al Lawma that Allah swears by. Allah does not swear by the Nafs al Amara. You see Allah does not swear by the first Nafs. He swears by the second Nafs; Because it's a great Nafs. Don't think it's not great. Because Allah swears by great things. And many Muslims live and die in the state of Luwama. They don't enter into the third state which is Mutmaina, and these are called <Arabic>, The People of the right. The people of Lawma, which blaming, who's conscious, whose faculties within their own heart enabled them to overcome their own evil, so that their good is greater than their evil. Their intentions are good and stronger than their intentions that are evil. But this dynamic tension exists within the human heart and Bani Adam has to rise up, to the level of overcoming the pole for the lower self.

<Arabic> You will not get out of this Heavens and Earth without this Sultan. From Allah, with power and authority from Allah, and it is Allah who gave us the Ism, to worship him. <Arabic> Remind people, give them Ism to make pilgrimage to the House. And this is the Adamic journey, to the Kabba, the Lord of the House.

This is where we are going. <Arabic> And to your Lord is your end, to your Lord is the Goal. So this is the Goal of Bani Adam.

Now the Lawma state which Allah swears by, <Arabic> Allah swears by the Nafs al-Lawma, the movement out of this state into Nafs Al-Mutmaina, is the highest movement of the human soul. Because this is entering into a state of Absolute submission. Prior to this Nafs al-Luwama, the human being, as long as there in Nafs al Amara, their in rebellion.

Their in rebellion to Allah. If their in Nafs al-Luwama, they move from rebellion to obedience. They move from rebellion to obedience. But Nafs al Mutmaina, is when the heart has becomes tranquil.

Now, how do we do this. Allah says <Arabic>, Isn't it by the dhikr of Allah, that the heart becomes tranquil. Allah says about the Munafiqeen, <Arabic> They only make mention of Allah a little bit. Allah says <Arabic>, You have in the messenger the best example; For who? The one who desires Allah Subhanawatallah. And he desires the last day. They're looking forward to meeting their Lord, <Arabic> - The one that loves to meet Allah, Allah loves to meet him. <Arabic> And he makes remembrance of Allah much. That if you make remembrance of Allah much, then Allah will give you the ability to smash the hold by which shaitaan has over you. <Arabic> You become free to creation, so you are free. And this is one of the secrets of the Arabic language, where Muollah, the freed slave, the master and the slave. The slaves and the slave. Allah is our Muollah, and we are also the Muollah. And this is one of the secrets of Aobodia to Allah, For Bani Adam is that you become free from this creation. That you are no longer a slave to creation. <Arabic>, How wretched is the slave to his clothes, and wealth all all these outward trappings of the world. This is the trap, <Arabic>, This is the snare of Shaitan, to delude you into thinking that the world is permanent. To delude you into thinking that you are not meant for the other world.

We are Okrawi people, we are not Doonyiwi people. Like Sulnaiman Nang says, the The Dunyists, The Dunyists, the worldly people. We are not those people, we are the people that were created for akhira, this is the sadaattain <Arabic> , And as for those that have true happiness, it is in Jannah.

<Arabic>, If you went you are completely exhausted, then to your look,

<Childs voice>

This is the Nafs al-Amara you see, the child, the Nafs al-Amara.

The Prophet SAWS Said,...now, one of the amazing thing about the human being, is that the human being is in a deep sleep. Now this is also, there is an element of Rahmat from Allah (SW), But there is also a dangerous element, And Allah says, <Arabic>, From his signs, from the signs of Allah SW, you will sleep by day, by night and by day. One of the interestingthing about the Arabic language is that you have something called <Apt>, which is a conjunction particle. And what the conjunction does, is that the Arabs like to repeat certain prepositions when they are talking about the same thing.

So for instance in that ayah, <Arabic>, and then he doesn't say, <Arabic>, because that would indicate, this would indicate two types of sleep. But this only one type of sleep. From his signs we are asleep during the day and the night. It's the same type of sleep, it's a continuous sleep. And Like Hazrat Ali said, <Arabic>, "People are asleep, and when they die, they wake up."

Now the one that believes this state, the infantile state of believing that they are immortal, which is the dream state. And if you look at the word in Arabic for intellect , and from the word Haleem, it means to dream. The most powerful aspect of the intellect is the word "Qial", which is the imagination.

And Qial is from <Arabic> or <Arabic>, And the arrogance and pride of the son of the Adam, is that they will not die and be raised up and **be questioned** by Allah, that they will not die and be raised up and **be questioned** by Allah SW.

They enter into the state of adulthood, which is the age of Takleef, which is called <Arabic>. Which is where you enter into puberty. The <Arabic> is once you internalize that first form of the verb, which is to, in other words you become aware the dreamlike state of the world.

In no way am I like the Hindu's this is Maya, an illusion. We're not Hindu's, we don't believe the world is an illusion. The world is very real. But its contingently real, it's not absolutely real. Allah is the absolutely real. This world is contingently real, its only real as long as Allah sustains it. When Allah SWdecides to annihilate it, <Arabic> Everything is in annihilation, except Allah SW. It's going to be destroyed, <Arabic>, everything is in annihilation and what remains is your Lord, the possessor of Beauty and Majesty. The possessor of Jalal and Ikram.

And so the human being has to wake up. And this is the pact. Now – how do we wake up? It's a part of how we be human. And since I only have about 1 minute left. I put this forward this ...for all of us to think about, that and I'll end it from these words from Allah, <Arabic> the human being is created in a state of anxiety. See the child is a antsy creature. Look about the infant, they're anxious, they're anxious about the food. Because they don't have a belief it's going to come again, they don't. And that's why they scream. They literally pout and give-up. Because they haven't learned to trust the caregiver. But as they move into trust, they don't cry for their food anymore, they just tell their mother, I'm hungry.

But initially they <cry>, and the mother has to go; Why? Because its frightened. It's still hungry, and it doesn't know if there's going to be food. This is the infantile Nafs, and this is the Nafs of the vast majority of human beings. They're screaming because they don't know if their provision will come to them.

So human beings are created in anxiety, and Allah SW says, <Arabic> When evil inflicts them, when Majesty afflicts him, <Arabic> he goes into despair, but not the muhwahid. This is the state of the infantile Nafs, they go into despair, they think it's the end of the world, <Arabic>, and when good touches them, When good comes to them, they become withholding, why? Because they're anxious, they're <Arabic> they don't think, I have to hold on to it. If I let go, then I'm going to lose it all.

Now, this is called the <Arabic> in the grammar, this is a group, this is a group. <Arabic>, except except men, except those that pray. Except those that pray.

Now part of our problem as Bani Adam, Allah SW says, <Arabic>, those that are forgetful about their prayer, they're people of prayer, but they forget about their prayer. <Arabic>, when they get up to pray, they pray lazy. They pray lazy, and the Prophet sought refuge from laziness.

<Arabic>, I seek refuge in Allah from incapacitation and laziness. Incapacitation is when you want to do something, when you want to do something, but don't have the strength to do it. Laziness is when you have the strength to do it, but you don't want to do it, <Arabic>.

And Allah says about these people <Arabic>, when they get up to pray, they get up lazy, they don't really want to pray, Abi Abu al-Hatim of Taif said, I never heard the azaan, except that I was yearning for prayer. I never heard the Azaan, except that I was yearning for prayer. The way to our humanity, if we want to leave our infantile state of anxiety, and enter a state of peace, the way is prayer. And this is why Prayer is <Arabic>, It's the Pillar of the deen. As an ummah, we have to go back to establishing prayer, we have to get up for Fajr. You see, the Muslims have to get up for Fajr, this is called mind over mattress. You see, you have to get up for Fajr. And I'll give you a good mechanism for not missing your Fajr.

The first thing you do, is recognize that shaitaan takes Bani Adam as a toilet bowl. And the toilet bowl is your ear, it even looks like a toilet bowl from one point of view. Now shaitaan, the person who doesn't wake up for Fajr, shaitaan urinates in his ear. That's what he does, <Arabic>, Don't laugh, <Arabic>, don't laugh.

How many times in here, and you ask yourself, how many times has shaitaan taken you as a toilet. How many times in your life, so far. Because the Prophet only missed the prayer, Fajr, twice, for <Arabic>, to show his ummah, <Arabic>, this is from our usool.

Sometimes our Prophet would do something, just to explain it to the people. You see, And it's actually <Arabic> for him, its drawing near to Allah. So how many times has the Shaitaan taken your ear as a toilet bowl.

Now the next thing to remember, on the Isra and Miraj, the Prophet (S) saw a group of people who had their heads smashed up against a rock, and then skulls would be brought together, and then they would be smashed again by Shayateen. And he said, Ya Jibril, who are these? <Arabic>, Those are the people who didn't really care about getting up for Fajr.

So we have to become people of Fajr. And that's the first victory against shaitaan for the day. If you haven't won that victory, then you've lost the battle already. Forget about the rest of the day. Because the Prophet said you'll wake up lazy, <Arabic>, And foul in your nature. So forget the rest of the day. If you lose that first battle, shaytaan's got you, forget the rest of the day, that doesn't mean you know...no, make Taubah, Inshallah, Allah accepts your Taubah, and we have to establish our prayers on time, and become Jamaat. Because the prayer in Jamaat is important, we want to learn Humanity, Ins, Ons, Insaan is from Ins, and Ons is with Allah, and our Oons with Allah, our Intimacy with Allah, is in prayer. It's called <Arabic>. Intimate discourse with Allah. And our prayers should be together with other insaan, <Arabic>, with other Bani Adam, with other nas.

And finally, Allah says, <Arabic> Say I seek refuge in the Lord of Nas, of humankind. <Arabic>, The King <Arabic>, If you want to enter into a state of humanity, you have to reject your shaitaan, you have to reject your Shaytan, and the way to reject your shaitaan, is to seek refuge in <Arabic>, and <Arabic>, is beyond any attribute, <Arabic>, Asalamualaikum.

Transcript for Etiquettes of Disagreement

Transcript Details

Event Name: Etiquettes of Disagreement

Transcript Author:

Description:

Date Transcribed: 1/1/2000 12:00:00 AM

Original URL:

One of the greatest problems confronting modern Muslims is our inability to tolerate each other, let alone others. Our tradition has a rich science known as "the courtesies of differences and the etiquette of discussion." In this edifying talk, The Etiquette of Disagreement, one of the greatest scholars today, Shaykh Abdallah bin Bayyah, illuminates the essential aspects of this subject.

All Muslims who plan to engage in any conversation should listen to this talk over and over again until its meanings are internalised and they understand that the secret of interlocution is a desire to know and not a desire to conquer. Only when we sublimate our egos and have a desire to engage in genuine dialogue with others do we achieve a spiritual status of what the English refer to as "the gentleman" and what the Arabs call al-adib - "the gentle one." - Hamza Yusuf

Shaykh Abdallah bin Mahfudh ibn Bayyah (born 1935CE 1362H) is an Islamic scholar born in Mauritania (West Africa). Currently he teaches at King Abdal Aziz University.

From an early age, his profound intellectual gifts and ability allowed him to memorise massive texts. In his youth, he was appointed to study legal judgements in Tunis. On returning to Mauritania, he became Minister of Education and later Minister of Justice. He was also appointed a Vice President of the first president of Mauritania. However, in part because of the military coup in Mauritania, he began to teach and traveled to Saudi Arabia where he became a distinguished professor at The University of Uşūl al-Fiqh.

The shaykh is presently involved in several organizations in the Muslim world, such as al Majma' al-Fiqhi, which comprises a body of scholars from across the Muslim world and from different madhhabs and viewpoints. They analyze and study modern issues confronting Muslims to formulate Islamic solutions.

Shaykh Abdallah is also an author, having written several books and delivered lectures in different countries. He has expertise in areas such as Fiqh al-'Aqalīyāt, the jurisprudence related

to Muslim minorities in non-Muslim lands. This is a specialist field pioneered by Shaykh Abdallah's colleague and friend the eminent Shaykh Yusuf al Qaradawi.

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

Shaykh Abdullah began by praising Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala and prayers on the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and then he said he is going to give a talk on the courtesies of disagreement and what happens when opinions differ amongst people and also the importance of avoiding dissention amongst the community and anything that disrupts the natural harmony of the community and their core des spri.

He mentioned several verses from the Quran, one of them being that Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala said in the Quran “do not differ because if you do, you will fail and the strength or the force that propels you forward will dissipate” and also that Allah says that if you differ about anything then its ruling is to Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala. Also in the Quran Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala says “and they continue to differ about matters except those who Allah has shown mercy to and for that reason they were created” and then he mentioned also a hadith that is related by it but it does not have a connected sanad to the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) which is “the ikhtilaf of my ummah or the differences of my ummah is a mercy” so the question is then how do you have harmony with difference of opinion? How do we keep hearts together when the opinions differ because Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala commanded the community to hold to the rope of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala and not to split into sects and groups and so he wishes to look at that and he said that maybe people would be surprised to know you can actually have deep differences and disagreements and still have harmony but if you understand the reasons for that then the surprise of the marvel disappears.

Then he said one the crisis that the muslim community perpetually faces but in particular today is the crisis of our inability to accept the other and this crisis occurs in jurisprudence. It occurs in creed and other matters, in fiqh, in aqeedah and these things. One of the things that one should be clear about is that diversity is part of the nature of the world that Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala created. Allah subhanahu wata'ala says that He brought forth from the fruits of the earth, fruits that differ in various colours and also the mountains. You see mountains that are white and black and red and these are signs of Allah also in your varying colours and the diversity of your complexions and the diversities of your tongue. The diversity and difference is one of the reasons of beauty, that we recognise beauty when we recognise diversity but the problem, this can turn ugly when it becomes a source of dissention, a source of resentment, a source of anger towards the other.

The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said in a riwayat, a narration that is related by Al Bahaqi, it is called maqtu which means it only goes to the tabi'i that related it and it gets cut off between the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and one generation of the sahaba and so he said this hadith is narrated by many many of the ulema and with an acceptance of it among them Imam al Joyini and several others. Imam Abideen one of the great Hanafi scholars said that the hadith was clearly musnad in the past, this is his understanding of it, but sometimes a hadith becomes so well known that it is repeated in the books like that so he accepted it as a valid hadith and it has been accepted by the ulema. Also Umar ibn Abdul Aziz said "I am glad that the companions of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) did not agree on everything". He said the meanings of that is when you have differences of opinions, it makes things broader and so that people can have more flexibility in their religion. Because when there is an ijmaa about something then everybody is forced to follow that opinion because there has been no dissent. So how did the sahaba understand ikhtilaf? He also mentioned that a Khalifah al Abassi actually wanted to impose the muwatta of Imam Malik which was a book that Imam Malik collected over 40 years and considered it to be the soundest of opinions but Imam Malik when he was told this said that he didn't want it to happen. He said this is an extraordinary example of humility but also an awareness of one's limitations because Imam Malik, his argument was that many of the sahaba have dispersed in the lands and there are things that might not have reached me and people should be allowed to discover those things so Imam Malik refused to allow his school to become the official school of the caliphate. He asked then the question how did the sahaba understand this difference of opinion? They understood that ikhtilaf first of all is not a state of anarchy, a state of belligerent anarchy that it was part of human nature and people always differ.

The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said in a hadith which is related by al-Bukhari, he said that everybody should pray at Bani Quraydah at Asr. Now when the sahaba were on the way to Bani Quraydah, Asr time came. Some of the sahaba understood that the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was telling them to hurry up and be at Bani Quraydah by Asr time. That is how they understood the statement. Other ones said no we don't pray Asr until we get to Bani Quraydah so some of the sahaba prayed the Asr prayer because the time came in and they said we were late, we didn't get to Bani Quraydah by Asr so we are going to pray now. The other group of sahaba said no. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said do not pray Asr unless you are at Bani Quraydah. So they chose to delay and when they got to Bani Quraydah they told the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) what happened and the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) did not condemn either group. In other words he accepted their ijtehad, both of the two groups so that is a very important hadith that the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) did not blame either one.

Another very important example about difference in our community is the differences in qiraat, the recitations that are used for the Quran. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam), Umar once

heard one of the sahaba reading something and he was reciting it difference to the way that Umar had been taught so he got angry, so he said that is wrong, I learned this from the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). So Umar got very angry and they both went to the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and both recited what they knew and the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said they were both correct.

In another example, Ubay ibn Kaab heard somebody reciting and he was one of the masters of the Quran, he heard somebody reciting who was different and he said that is not the way it goes, this is the way the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) taught and when he went the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) told him they were both correct. Ubay said some doubt came into his heart at the moment and the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) recognised that and struck him on his chest and Ubay said at that point it was as if he was looking at his Lord, that he had absolutely certainty about that so the Shaykh said that also the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) prohibited is from aggressively differing from each other and he said don't fight one another, don't have dissention, be brothers in Islam so despite the fact that there were differences, the overriding commandment from the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) is to maintain the harmony of the hearts.

The first major difference that occurred was in the khilafah when the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) passed away and went to the highest gathering, he did not appoint specifically a Khalif. He had appointed Abu Bakr to lead the prayer and some of them understood that that was an indication but there was no specific appointment. For that reason the sahaba differed. The Ansar began to gather together and when the Muhajiroun heard about this, Abu Bakr and Umar, some of them went to meet with them and the Ansar were debating who would they appoint from amongst the Ansar as the Khalif. Then Abu Bakr came to them and said "you know that this matter with the Arabs, is that they would not accept other than Quraysh" because of the status of the Quraysh and also that Allah Himself had shown that the Muhajiroun actually were over the Ansar in the Quran when He specified the Muhajiroun made hijrah and then mentioned the Ansar after them that Allah had elevated them for their hijrah and everything they went through in Makkah and so at that point Abu Bakr suggested to them they appoint Umar but Umar realised at that point Abu Bakr should be the khalif because he was the second in the cause so he put his hand in the hand of Abu Bakr and he took the bayah with him.

Now the other sahabah at that point even though they differed they accepted Abu Bakr and so the Shaykh said here is an example of where there was a difference the Ansar were differing with the Quraysh and Muhajiroun but they discussed it, looked at the Quran, talked about things. Each group brought their own opinions forward so they settled upon an agreement so this is an example of the ikhtilaf that is resolved, a difference that is resolved through discussion, through agreement after the discussion what Allah termed shura so they ended in an agreement.

But there are other times when they did not end in agreement so they either discussed things ended in agreement or they discussed things and recognised that it was an insolvable problem and they respected each other's opinions. The second major difference that occurred was the gathering of the Quran into one specific mushaf. This occurred during the khilafah of Abu Bakr when many of the people who memorised the Quran had died in battle. So Umar was worried that the Quran would be lost and Abu Bakr said "how can I do something that the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) himself did not do?". So he was worried about an innovation so he kept on until his heart was expanded and so the gathering of the Quran began after that so initially many of the sahaba disagreed about gathering the Quran into one mushaf because it hadn't been done but once they had discussed it and looked at the benefits of it and recognised that it was a sound thing to do when it was done.

Another one was when they were a lot of futaha during the time of Umar and when they went into the lands of Iraq and Syria in these places they differed about what they should do about the land that was being conquered and so Umar actually had three different shura councils set up that involved the people of the Ansar, the people of the Muhajireen and another group. They discussed amongst themselves and came together and they differed about that. Some said that it should be made a community property and then the people who worked on that would pay jizyah or karaj for the land itself. Then others said no it should be distributed amongst the people who conquered the lands. So they concluded it should be worked by the people and then they would pay a tax for their work to the Islamic government. So this was another example where they came to a conclusion after much debate and difference. If you look at an example of a difference of opinion where they debated but didn't come to anything conclusive but there was respect, the most striking of these is the difference of Aisha ummul momineen and Sayyidina Ibn Abbas. They differed about whether or not the Prophet saw his Lord on the Isra Miraj and Aisha said that anybody who said that was absolutely outrageous and her hair stood on end by hearing somebody say that. Ibn Abbas understood that to mean that his eye did not deviate nor did it divert, his heart did not belie what he saw, that was the etific vision. Aisha understood that to mean Jibril so she interpreted it to mean it was Jibril. Now here is two very learned people looking at the exact same text and coming to different conclusions. Aisha never lost respect for Ibn Abbas even though she differed in a core matter here. She differed with him completely but each of them respected the other and this is what the Shaykh called Khilaf Hamid. It is a praiseworthy difference even though there was no conclusion each respected the other.

He said another aspect was the sahaba when they differed they avoided attacking the other people with the foul language and using anything that was inappropriate for e.g. Ibn Umar related a hadith in which he said he heard the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) say that the dead are punished for the wailing of the living so if people would wail over the grave or at the funeral of a dead person, the dead person is punished. Aisha when she heard that she said it is not

accurate. She said perhaps Ibn Umar made a mistake, perhaps he did not hear that because the Quran very clearly states that one soul is not punished for the sins of another soul and she took a verse of the Quran and did not accept a solitary transmission of a hadith because the verse of Quran that she thought it basically stated the opposite of what he was stating in the particular example and so Ibn Umar said he heard that by the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). Later on the ulema came to kind of agreement about that if the dead person encouraged those people to cry then that would be the condition but there is an example again where both of them differed yet they held respect for each other and did not resort to any foul language or cursing or anything like that.

Then another thing that the sahaba differed on was whether dead people could hear after they died. Some of the sahaba said that they understood the Quran to mean you cannot make the dead hear and they understood that to mean dead people do not hear. Other of the sahaba said we clearly heard the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) at Badr say then when he was speaking to the dead the mushrikeen that were in the well that they said “can they hear you Ya Rasulullah?” He said “they are not any less capable of hearing than you” are so that was an example again of where the sahaba differed but did not come to any decisive conclusion about the matter. Some of them said that was specific to those people and it was not for other people so it remained a difference amongst them.

Another example was that Umar considered if a person divorced a woman three times which is the baynuna of al kubra where she cannot go back to the husband that still during the period, he had to pay for the housing and for the provision of the woman during that time. Fatima bint Qays who was one of the greatest sahaba and she was also very learned, she said it is not sound that the woman, the marriage is over because the whole purpose of the iddah was Allah says perhaps He will make something come out that period, in other words there will be reconciliation, they will come together. She said if there is no option, if there is no possibility of reconciliation then there is no reason for her to be in the house of that man or be taken care of in that period of time. So the Shaykh said the ulema who saw these two different proofs later, Imam Malik, Imam Shafi and Imam Ahmad went with the opinion of Fatimah bint Qays and Sayyidia Abu Hanifah went with the opinion of Sayyidina Umar and all of them are rightly guided so there is an example where they did not come to a conclusion but they recognised that the problem was insoluble and that one could not be preferred over the other in any decisive way so they agreed to disagree.

Another example is the Khawrij. When Ali was being opposed by the Khawarij he was asked by his companions “do you consider them kuffar?” He said “how could they be kuffar, they fled from kuffar because they were very staunch muslims in their practice”. They said “then are they munafiqun (hypocrites)?” and Ali said “how could they be hypocrites, Allah said the hypocrites only mention Allah a little and these people mention Allah all the time, all the time they are

remembering Allah so how can they be hypocrites”. They said “then what are these people?”. “These are our brothers in faith who have transgressed the boundaries with us and have oppressed us” and so he said these are examples of the sahaba even when they differed they still maintained the highest moral probity, they still maintained the highest ethical standards of difference even when they were at war with the people as in the case of Imam Ali where they still respected them and would not speak ill of them. So he said these are profound examples of this courtesy in differing.

Knowledge of ikhtilaf is for conviviality, for the ability of live together and he said it is an essential quality and for this reason Imam al Makhani said a beautiful thing he said “learn the differences of the ulema and allow your breast to expand because in learning the differences of opinion and the fact that the ulema differed on so many things, it enables you to look with a broader vision of things and to see things with more generosity and he said that is why the ulema their view, their opinion of ikhtilaf has always been a positive one. It is not a negative one. They have understood it in a positive light not a negative light and this is why Abu Yusuf and Imam Muhammad who were the two primary students of Abu Hanifah they differed immensely with their Imam even though he was their primary teacher, they learned from him, they differed with him. Imam Shafi who was a student of Imam Malik, he differed with him and this is because things change. Conditions change, time changes. He said there is a difference in a time, there are opinions that you might have held in an earlier period that more appropriate opinions that you considered less appropriate at that time became necessary at a later time and this is clear in the lives of the Imams. Their opinions changed when they moved geographically to places. He said your condition here in the lands of non muslims is different to the conditions of muslims living in the land of muslims where the primary population are muslim.

So these are differences, also you have normative differences of the actual habits of people and the normals of a people, these differ so all of these aspects of different are very important to understand why things differ. He said that for instance if you look, the ulema do not greet non muslims with their greetings and there is hadith and also opinions of the ulema to indicate that. He said from the unusual position of Ibn Taymiyyah he said that he actually said that it was permitted to greet non muslims with the greetings that they use and they greet you and he said there are three opinions from Imam Ahmad. One was permissibility, one was prohibition, the other was that it was undesirable and so he said Imam Ibn Taymiyyah chose this from among those positions and some of the ulema considered it to be one of his appropriate choices in the Hanbali madhab. So he said you should apply that principle here, you are living with people here who are not doing anything, they are not causing you any harm and if they greet you, you should greet them and exchange those greetings. He also said that it was permissible to visit them and visit them during their festival occasions so when they were having festivities you could visit them for that reason and visiting their sick people if they were in hospital or somebody that you were

working with or something like that was sick that that was also something that should be encouraged in their land so he said these are very important. Even though Ibn Taymiyyah, people that quote him, often quote him to use him as a stick, use him as a source of harshness and severity, that opinion is there.

Imam Ahmad was of the opinion that if blood was actually flowing from a wound that it invalidated the wudu so somebody asked him “you wouldn’t pray behind somebody who had that situation”. He said “SubhanAllah you do not think I would pray behind Imam Malik”. That was his opinion of course I would pray behind him. Even though he was of that opinion he recognised the other opinion was valid and it would not prevent him from praying with that person. He also said about Ishaq ibn Rahay he said “I never met anybody in the land of Iraq that was more learned than that man yet I differed with him” and then he said “people will continue to differ” even though he saw that that man was the most learned man he had seen in that country, he said “I have differences of opinion with him but those differences of opinion do not stop me from recognising his virtue and his excellent qualities”. Then he said that Imam Shafi differed with Imam Malik in some really essential matters even though he was his student and he said that Imam Shafi despite that said if the ulema are mentioned, Malik is the north star and he said on the day of judgment my proof is between me and my Lord is Imam Malik. So these differences should not be a cause for animosity to be prevalent amongst the muslims. They should not be a reason for people to cut each other off.

Abu Yusuf when he came to Madinah and he heard the adhan and the people of Madinah, the adhan of the Maliks only has two takbir Allahu Akbar instead of four like the Iraqi adhan and then it repeats the shahadatain. When Abu Yusuf heard that he said I have a hadith on so and so and so that he says the adhan is like this and he heard that from his teacher. Imam Malik said do you think I care about a hadith from so and so and so and so when 10,000 sahaba died in this city and this is the adhan we have been hearing since we were little kids and the sahaba heard it themselves and the tabieen heard it and nobody has ever said the adhan was otherwise so that was his opinion even though the hadith differed. He said “it is clear to me that this is the adhan of the city of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and nobody came and changed it at some point so I am not going to take your hadith” so there is an example of a difference of opinion.

Abu Yusuf said that if my teacher Abu Hanifah had heard the proof that Imam Malik had said he would have probably changed his opinion. It is not the opinion but he was just saying it is a strong proof for him.

Then he said really when you look at this, there is a democratic aspect to this because he said at the essence of a democratic world view is that people dismiss things and then they differ about things but they recognise the right of the other person to differ with them. He said wisdom is the

lost beast of the a believer so it is the idea of just rejecting that principle because it seems alien to us, the word is alien to us, he said it is not, it is very Islamic principle and he said Muslims need to expand their breast. He said we have to have broader breasts when we deal with each other. We have Muslims now when they hear anything that disagrees with their opinion or goes against what they believe they become like a bull and begin to snort and be aggressive. He said that is not at the essence of this teaching. He said if you look at the Quran, the Quran has really established the principles of hiwar which is the dialogue and the Quran mentions in the Quran that Allah Himself had heard the dialogue of the woman and the wife when she went and complained to the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and Allah told the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) to debate with them in the best of ways and you will find that in many verses in the Quran.

When Imam Ali sent Ibn Abbas to the Khawarij he said “when they debate with you debate with them using the sunnah because the Quran is open to any many interpretations” whereas the sunnah is very specific because the sunnah is to clarify the Quran so he was telling him to do that.

So he said this is an essential virtue of our Islamic religion. This is an essential value of our religion in Islam which is the ability to accept the opinions of the other. He said the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) the first khutbah that he gave when he went to Madinah was “love each other in the spirit of Allah, love each other in the grace of God”. He said this is something that we have to do, we have to really begin to open our hearts to our brothers and sisters amongst the community and begin to be much more broadminded in this approach. It said anyone who comes to sow dissention amongst you, there are two possibilities:

- He is just somebody who is very narrow minded and constructed by nature so he has just a psychological problem
- He has bad intention. It is somebody who is trying to provoke the muslims to fight amongst each other because disunity enables some people who have their own personal reasons for the muslims to be disunited.

So it is very important to be aware of that. It is one of two reasons. In both cases you should reject them. Anybody that comes with this narrow constricted way of looking at things and condemning everybody else that this person is a trouble maker, that people should avoid and he said that we, the muslim is the brother of the muslim. He does not oppress him, he does not turn him over to his oppressors, he protects him. The muslims are like one body, they are like bricks in a building, each is supporting the other and the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said do not cut each other off, do not fight amongst one another, do not play one's commercial benefits

over another's commercial benefits but rather be brothers for the sake of Allah. Do not return ingrates after my teaching has come to you, each striking the neck of the other so he said my advice is to you to love one another for the sake of Allah. He said also love other people for what they share in humanity, for the people out there, we should love for them what we love for ourselves. We should love for them guidance and goodness. When you go out there and look at other people, you have to look at them with compassion and look at them with the eye of humanity and not with some type of contempt or hatred.

So this is my message to you that I want to leave with you that you really need to expand your horizons. Work together, have shura amongst you, have dialogue and mutual consultation in your affairs, and listen to the other attentively and do not cut each other off.

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/Etiquettes-of-Disagreement#sthash.sliNvqym.dpuf>

Transcript for Doha Debates

Transcript Details

Event Name: Doha Debates

Transcript Author: Doha

Description: Doha Debates

Date Transcribed: 2/28/2006 12:00:00 AM

Original

URL: <http://www.thedohadebates.com/debates/debate.asp?d=33&s=2&mode=transcript>

- Introduction
- Definitions of extremism and terrorism
- Is the Israeli government an extreme government?
- Political extremism and religious extremism
- Danish cartoons
- Are the extremists ever right?
- What can Muslim women do to fight the rise of extremism?
- On what basis does the UN think they will listen to this new forum?

Introduction TIM SEBASTIAN

Ladies and gentlemen, a very good afternoon to you and welcome to this special session of Doha Debates sponsored by the Qatar Foundation. It coincides with a meeting here in Doha of the Alliance of Civilisations - the UN initiative set up to combat extremism wherever it appears, and that's our issue for today too. But who can define extremism for the rest of the world? Look at the difficulties in defining terrorism, and as we've seen in the current controversy over the Danish cartoons, who's going to listen to any pleas for calm or moderation? Just some of the questions that are going to be asked today by our student audience coming as they do from many countries, but predominantly from the Arab world. Well, as you can see, we have a distinguished panel bracing itself to respond to their questions: Desmond Tutu, who as Archbishop of Cape Town, was one of the chief architects of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and a Nobel Peace Prize winner; Diana Butt, a lawyer by training and a former legal adviser to the Palestine Liberation Organisation during peace negotiations with Israel. She also helped to set up an outreach programme speaking directly to ordinary Israelis about the effects of occupation. Shaykh Hamza Yusuf, a leading and outspoken Muslim scholar. He travels the world giving talks on Islam and is the founder of the Zaytuna Institute dedicated to the revival of traditional Islamic study methods and the sciences of Islam. And Dr. John Esposito, Professor and Founding Director of the Centre for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University. He's also served as President of the Middle East Studies Association of North America, and is a prolific author with some 30 titles to his name. Ladies and gentlemen, our panel and welcome to all of you. What we're going to try and do first of all, and maybe this is very ambitious, but we're going to try and get the issue of definitions out of the way so that it

doesn't dog our discussions for the rest of the afternoon, so could I please ask Nasser Al Thani to give us the first question.

Definitions of extremism and terrorism

AUDIENCE Q (M)

I would like to see an internationally agreed-upon definition to extremism and terrorism. Does the panel think this can ever be possible?

TIM SEBASTIAN

Desmond Tutu, can we get definitions of extremism and terrorism? We haven't had much luck in doing that so far, have we?

DESMOND TUTU

Extremism. What is the norm? I have a large nose but the norm is maybe a nice aquiline nose. Maybe people who are passionate about their faith, but extremism is when I think you do not allow for a different point of view, and when you hold your view as being quite exclusive, when you don't allow for the possibility of difference. How's that?

TIM SEBASTIAN

So being dogmatic is all that is extremism, is it, to that extent?

DESMOND TUTU

Yes. I think, I mean, it's good to be clear about your point of view, and even to be passionate about it, to say, 'I believe very firmly in the fact that each person is of immense infinite value,' and to hold on to that, but to say perhaps you have a different point of view and I must make space for your different point of view. My father used to say, 'Don't raise your voice, improve your argument.'

TIM SEBASTIAN

Sshaykh Hamza Yusuf, do we need a definition?

HAMZA YUSUF

I think extremism is very hard to define, because extremes are on some continuum and it depends on who's defining that. So for instance, someone like Noam Chomsky is considered extreme left in the United States, whereas in England he's not extreme left, he's something Guardian (UK newspaper) readers or Independent (UK newspaper) readers would see as a reasonable argument. In US mainstream media, he's considered extreme left in his political views, not his linguistic views. So I think that's a real problem, defining extremism. I think it's

maybe a little bit like obscenity. You know I know when I see it but it's one of those nebulous terms. I think terrorism is also in some ways difficult to define. For instance the Baader-Meinhof or the Red Brigades in the 1970's are terrorist organisations that were working from a Marxist premise within a society that was not occupying them or it was a response to expressing their political views through violence. In the Muslim world, terrorism is almost entirely directly associated with occupation, and it ends up being tactics of people that are powerless against very, very large military might, so if you look at Chechnya, if you look at Iraq, if you look at Kashmir, if you look at Palestine, I think you're going to see that terrorism is directly related to occupation of powerless people. If you remove the occupation, I think the terrorism would go.

TIM SEBASTIAN

But without a definition of extremism, how do you know what you're combating?

HAMZA YUSUF

I think the best definition that I can come up with is Caleb Carr's definition which is that terrorism is the use of violence against civilians in order that the population that's being aggressed upon forces their government to the table of negotiation or to some change in their policies. I think that at the end of the day if we define it as violence against civilians, certainly A.C. Grayling, the British historian who's just written a book asking whether or not the carpet bombing of Germany and the Hiroshima and Nagasaki were war crimes, or were they acts of terrorism because they were largely against civilian populations. Today in every war that's being fought in the modern period, for every one combatant that's killed, there are ten civilians, over 100,000 by Johns Hopkins' reckoning, over 100,000 Iraqi civilians were killed in the bombing. Now, you can call that collateral damage, but for the Iraqi that's facing that, it's terror.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Diana Buttu, definition of extremism.

DIANA BUTTU

I think it's very difficult to come up with a definition of extremism because again, it implies that there's a norm and unfortunately we see that norms are shifting and changing, just in the same way that the Archbishop has said that in some cases his nose would be considered large, in other areas it wouldn't be considered large at all.

TIM SEBASTIAN

But hopefully people wouldn't fight over his nose.

DIANA BUTTU

No, I hope they wouldn't fight over his nose! But that's why I think because we're in a changing world that it is very difficult to make definitions of what extremism is.

TIM SEBASTIAN

But don't we have to if we're going to fight it?

DIANA BUTTU

I think it's important to understand what the cause of it is rather than to make a definition of what it is.

TIM SEBASTIAN

But it's not an abstract concept, it's propagated by people.

DIANA BUTTU

It is absolutely propagated by people, just in the same way that terrorism is propagated by people, but so is war, and unfortunately we've gotten to a point where terrorism is the new bad word rather than the word 'war'. There was a time when I was growing up when the word 'war' or 'apartheid', those sorts of concepts were much worse than terrorism, and I think now because we don't know exactly who it is that's carrying out these acts, or why it is that they're carrying out these acts, we suppose that we don't know, that that's why it becomes a much more looming term than that of war, but as Shaykh Hamza Yusuf just said, there are far more people who are killed by war than there are by acts of terrorism, and I think that it's much more important to understand why all of these acts of violence are taking place in the first place.

TIM SEBASTIAN

John Esposito, are we starting with a muddle where definitions are concerned? Is that a major setback?

JOHN ESPOSITO

I think I'd want to clarify something and that is that as members of this side of the audience can attest to, the Archbishop is incorrect when he talks about the fact that he has a large nose compared to anybody else on this panel. As a southern Italian, I'm very competitive, I win on that one. I think that what I would say with regard to where we're going with this though is, the characteristics that you describe for extremists are right on the mark. The problem when we apply the term is we need to know the specific context. That's the issue, and the same thing happens with the word terrorist. We can agree, as it were, in the abstract on a definition of what terrorism is, but when we go to apply it, for example, Nelson Mandela was seen as a terrorist leader of a terrorist group, you know, Arafat and the Palestinians on the one hand, Begin and Shamir at one point seen as leading terrorist groups but then they became established, so we can talk about the characteristics, we can come up with definitions but actually the only way we can talk about it seems to

TIM SEBASTIAN

But we can't apparently come up with definitions, can we? This is the problem.

JOHN ESPOSITO

We can come up with an abstract definition but when we want to get specific, then we have to look at a specific political or religious context.

Is the Israeli government an extreme government?

TIM SEBASTIAN

OK, well, we have a second questioner who wants to get quite specific, Omar Alouba, could we have your question please?

AUDIENCE Q (M)

Does the panel consider the Israeli government extremist in that it kills innocent Muslim women and children in Palestine?

TIM SEBASTIAN

Diana Buttu, do you want to take that?

DIANA BUTTU

Yes, I do consider that the Israeli government is an extremist government in that it has maintained an occupation now over the Palestinians for close to 39 years. It has carried out immense acts of aggression against the Palestinians including the killing of innocent civilians, the demolition of homes, the deportation of Palestinians, the denial of natural resources, and most importantly the denial of freedom. All of this has been done for a political purpose, and the political purpose is to try to rid historic Palestine of the Palestinians in order to create Eretz Israel, the larger Israel, so yes, I do consider it extremist.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Do you consider Hamas an extremist movement as well, blowing up civilians on buses?

DIANA BUTTU

I think that the acts that Hamas is carrying out would in fact in my definition of extremist, be labelled extremist, but I think it goes back to the problem with definitions. Definitions are like laws, they're created by the powerful to be used against the powerless, and so by and large when we talk about definitions ...

TIM SEBASTIAN

But we have the Alliance of Civilizations High Level Group going to battle with them, so they have to have the definitions, don't they?

DIANA BUTTU

What's that, sorry?

TIM SEBASTIAN

The high level group from the AOC, they need to have a definition.

DIANA BUTTU

Yes, they do.

TIM SEBASTIAN

They don't want to oppress anybody, do they?

DIANA BUTTU

No, they don't want to oppress anybody, but I think it is important to understand the context in which international law and international relations take place, which is there, is a powerful and there is a powerless, and it's by and large the powerful who are making the definition to be used against those who are powerless.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Desmond Tutu, the Israeli government.

DESMOND TUTU

One has to be extremely careful when you are speaking into a volatile situation such as this, and to say I mean that there are actions that are reprehensible, but again, when you use certain terminology, you exacerbate an unfortunate situation. I think, I mean a lot of the action by the Israeli government is reprehensible and it is something that some of us have certainly criticised, but you see, we are always trying to ensure that what you say doesn't pour oil or petrol on an already volatile situation. I think, I mean that if we are going to be trying to resolve a problem, then you want to be careful about the epithets that we use of the protagonists

TIM SEBASTIAN

Shaykh Hamza Yusuf.

HAMZA YUSUF

Well, I think governments have municipalities. I don't know whether the municipalities are extreme. So they might have extreme garbage men, then I don't know, but certainly in their policies vis-à-vis the Palestinian state, I would have to absolutely assert that they're an extreme government. Collective guilt is not recognised by any law tradition on this planet that has any weight, and so destroying people's houses because they happen to be related to somebody that supposedly committed a crime or is an extreme and gross aggression against all sense of international justice.

TIM SEBASTIAN

So you would want to see the AOC Group going to the Israeli government and saying on behalf of the United Nations that this is reprehensible behaviour and you should stop?

HAMZA YUSUF

Absolutely.

TIM SEBASTIAN

John Esposito.

JOHN ESPOSITO

I think that to start with the Archbishop's comment, I think that one does have to be careful about what one says, but I think that one can talk about and make statements by referring comparatively to both sides, so for example one can say that Israel has an absolute right to exist in safety and security, but so do the Palestinians, to a state, etc., and when it comes to acts of extremism and terrorism, the position that I've basically taken publicly is that just as suicide bombing from my point of view, however much one may understand the agony from which it comes and is motivated, when you're targeting civilians, it's an act of terrorism. Similarly, not all but a fair number of the actions and policies of the Israeli government, whether it's collective guilt, targeted assassinations, etc. are also acts of terror.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Rabbi Schneier, would you like to come in on this? We can get a microphone to you, please. All we would ask is if you could stand up so the cameras can see you, that would be great

RABBI SCHNEIER (Alliance of Civilizations member)

We can go on with finger-pointing back and forth. That is not going to get us anywhere. There's a very basic premise, and the basic premise is mutual acceptance, or in my words, to live and let live. I want you to live as a sovereign, independent state of Palestine, and I want Israel to be a sovereign, independent Israel. Mutual acceptance, it's the only way to go, and I think that the road map adopted by the United Nations along with the European Union and Russia is the goal, but we're not going to get anywhere beyond finger-pointing if we concentrate on definitions. We

need to build trust and eliminate the hatred and the violence and then we can...Look, I'm a firm believer, every conflict comes to an end. The Hundred Year War came to an end, the Thirty War came to an end, World War 1 came to an end, I'm a survivor of World War 2, it came to an end, and the Korean War etc. And I tell you young people, it's in your hands, because you control the future, we're the past, you control the future. If you reach out to one another in terms of mutual acceptance, you can build a glorious future, and that's the way to go, and I'm convinced that this conflict will come to an end just as any other conflict.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Can you have mutual acceptance though of people who commit atrocities or other extremist acts?

RABBI SCHNEIER

Do not stereotype and do not generalise, and above all, it's very interesting, by the way in Judaism, in the Bible not once, 36 times it's repeated, 'Love your stranger,' not once, because it's the tendency of the human being to be suspicious of the other. What are we talking about, xenophobia and anti-Semitism or Islamaphobia, what is it? That's what we're talking about, so the way to go is really respect for the other, respect for human life, respect for the stranger. You talk a lot about democracy. You want to have a definition of democracy? How the majority treats the minority, whether it's politically or religiously speaking, that is a barometer, how the majority treats the minority.

TIM SEBASTIAN

OK. Thank you very much. Diana, can you live with that?

DIANA BUTTU

With the definition of democracy?

TIM SEBASTIAN

Yes.

DIANA BUTTU

I think it's a test of a strong democracy, litmus test, is how is it that we do treat the minorities, this is something that I've always been advocating and looking towards is, how is it that we treat the weakest elements of our own society? Are they treated with respect, with dignity, or are they treated as though they're second-class citizens, and unfortunately in the case of the Palestinians, they haven't been treated with dignity or with respect, and there are Palestinians who are citizens of Israel who are minorities, who are second-class citizens, who are not treated with any dignity, respect, and above all have been denied their freedom, so in that respect it's not a strong democracy.

TIM SEBASTIAN

John Esposito.

JOHN ESPOSITO

I would agree with what you said, but I think that one of the challenges that we have which grow out of what the rabbi said, in my own understanding of democracy is to step back when we're doing this, and always realise that part of the problem most people have in communicating from my point of view is that they compare their ideal to somebody else's ideal, of reality rather than ideal to ideal, reality to reality. And while we can talk about the situation of the Palestinians in the way in which you articulate, I would agree with that part of the challenge in terms of democracy in the broader region of the Middle East is the question of other minorities, and the extent to which for example in many Arab and Muslim countries, the space is created for minorities. Just ironically for you the audience - many of you would know this but others wouldn't - as a result of the fact that in the last 30 or 40 years, Muslims have gone from being invisible in the West to being the second or third largest religion, you now have the situation where a reverse situation has happened. Muslims now are dealing with and Muslim thinkers are dealing with the whole question of minorities not only in terms of, as it were, the Muslim world, that they have to deal with what does it mean to be a Muslim minority and to develop if you will a kind of theology of minorities.

Political extremism and religious extremism

TIM SEBASTIAN

Can I just give a reminder that we do want to hear also from you, our student participants, and also from the UN group as well, so please if you have any feelings to share them with us. Lady in the fourth row, we'll get a microphone to you, please.

AUDIENCE Q (F)

I guess you're being, in trying to define what extremism is and what's terrorism, I think that there is a difference between the political extremism and religious extremism. I think that religious extremism is going beyond the fundamentalism. For example sharia for Muslims is doing it exactly the way God has asked us to do it, and for me, religious extremism is going beyond that, it's trying to impose it on others to be like them, and it's before terrorism. I think terrorism is linked with violence. But if you're an extremist, you're not necessarily a terrorist. This is what I think personally, and I think that political extremism is like wanting to impose your opinion on the other parties, like in government or ...

TIM SEBASTIAN

OK, Shaykh Hamza Yusuf.

HAMZA YUSUF

Well, I mean, I think I agree with that in terms of extremism. For a lot of people in the West now in a society informed by secularism so the fact that I pray and wash five times a day would be seen as Obsessive Compulsive Disorder to some people, you know, like a pathology, so I think people will consider a lot of Muslims religious extremists because they pray the minimum five times a day. For a Muslim, it's actually, it's interesting in Islam, the definition of extremism includes also lack of religion, so people that are not religious are seen as extremist in that they're not fulfilling a basic human function. So again it's about definitions and who's defining them, and I think different cultures will define things very differently. You know, Foucault says ultimately it is the powerful that define things, and right now Western civilisation has an immense amount of sovereignty on the planet, and so in that sense it has framed the discourse, and all of us are often stuck in this position of reacting to an already framed discourse and not allowing our own terms of debate to be allowed into the discourse, so we Muslims have to constantly define ourselves, 'I'm not an extremist, I'm not a terrorist, I'm not this, I'm not that,' as opposed to being able to be in a more positive position which is always taken by the powerful. They're the ones that tell us who they are and they force us to tell them who we're not.

JOHN ESPOSITO

I think the danger of religious extremism can be, even though it's not necessarily violent, when it becomes exclusivist in which is basically says, 'Not only is my faith right, but your faith is absolutely wrong, and not only is my faith right, but my faith position within my faith is right, and so another Muslim who disagrees with me is wrong,' then you're moving into a very dangerous position here because you're bordering on what I would call theology of hate. That kind of mentality can easily be used by some, and it has been used by people like Osama Bin Laden, to legitimate military action at a certain point. You can easily slip over the line once you're into that realm of what I would call theology of hate, and we see that with elements of the Christian right, the Jewish right, and with elements of the Muslim right. I'm avoiding the word fundamentalism here, but you know what I mean.

Danish cartoons

TIM SEBASTIAN

Right. I want to move on to one of the most controversial issues of all which is the Danish cartoons, and we have a question from Lenin Dias, please.

AUDIENCE Q (M)

How can a Muslim ever explain to a Christian the reason of the uproar over the cartoons? I am a Christian and I understand that the Prophet should never be drawn or pictured, but I don't understand why so many people have to be killed because of it, and so aren't there any Muslims who see this as extreme?

TIM SEBASTIAN

OK. You say you understand that there shouldn't be a drawing of the Prophet, but why would so

many people want to kill because of it? Aren't there any Muslims who think that this is extreme?
Hamza Yusuf.

HAMZA YUSUF

First of all I think that the reactions in a lot of places were certainly extreme reactions. I mean, nothing would warrant the violence that occurred in Pakistan or Nigeria or other places. Over 40 people have been killed as a result. On the other hand, I think one of the things for the West, particularly Western Europe and probably less so in the United States, is that it's very, very difficult for people to realise now that religious identity in the Muslim world is far more important than racial identity. Racial denigration is not tolerated in the West. It's considered completely unacceptable and it's condemned. That doesn't mean that the extreme right don't have rights, they do. The ACLU in America defends the right of Nazis to congregate and they spew out their racist diatribes, but nobody will defend it, you know, the right to insult, the right to gratuitously attack peoples of race and colour. On the other hand, religion is just fair game. I think what we need to do globally is conflate race and religion because at the core of race is identity, and at the core of a true religious experience is identity. I am identified as a believer first and foremost. If you denigrate my religion, you are doing something far more grievous to me than attacking my race, and that's where the response to the cartoons came from.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Let me bring in Desmond Tutu here. How do you stop legitimate anger turning to extremism, like in the case of the cartoons?

DESMOND TUTU

I myself have appealed to our Muslim sisters and brothers, having been offended as they were, and I was among those who did make the appeal for the demonstrations to have been dignified and peaceful. But I think we particularly Christians are incredibly arrogant to actually sometimes even suggest that you have no reason to be hurt saying, I mean, how can you be hurt just by a cartoon? And I think it's an incredible arrogance on anyone's part. I mean, some people said, 'Well, we are sorry that we offended you, but you had no right to be offended.' I say, just try and say that to your wife, if you are married! I think we ought to be looking to ourselves, because you see, if we had a slightly different power disposition, we wouldn't say that.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Diana Buttu, were there Muslims in the Gaza Strip where you live who thought the reaction to the cartoons was extreme?

DIANA BUTTU

I am a Muslim and I do live in the Gaza Strip and I thought the reaction was extreme, but at the same time it was understandable, and why do I say this? I didn't want to see people killed, I think it's reprehensible and I'm very sad that so many people died, but unfortunately in the minds of

many of the people who were protesting, they had no other means of actually expressing their discontent over the idea of the cartoon, over the actual publication of the cartoon. And many were actually focused on the fact that the newspaper had just a couple of weeks before said that they would have never issued a similar cartoon that had depicted Christians in a similar manner, because of their readership, or they would have never depicted another cartoon depicting Jews in a similar manner, because they knew what the backlash would be, and yet they didn't care about depicting Muslims in this manner, because they didn't care about what the backlash would be...

TIM SEBASTIAN

But you're offering understanding for an extremist reaction?

DIANA BUTTU

I understand why it happened. I don't agree with it. I think that the reason that the protests were happening is complex and there was a question of freedom of expression within the Arab world itself, whether these were really spontaneous outbursts of anger and so on and so forth, but I think that for those who were actually protesting, it was by and large because there is no other means of expressing their discontent with the Danish government and other governments.

TIM SEBASTIAN

John Esposito.

JOHN ESPOSITO

I think there are a couple of things that come into play here. I think one clearly, there was a strong religious motivation for that reaction. As somebody who's studied with Muslim teachers and mostly Muslim students, although at a secular university in America 35 years ago, that was driven home to me. But I think the reality of it is, was that the cartoon and the reaction to the cartoon, the roots of that rage and anger run much deeper. It has to do with the political and social situation of many Muslims in many parts of the world, and particularly among other things - setting aside the question of the Arab/Israeli conflict - looking at the fact that for many Muslims, the war against global terrorism increasingly looks like a war against Islam and the Muslim world, the same dependency, humiliation etc. and then to see your most sacred symbol ridiculed ... It'd be different if you had the cartoons dealing with Zaraqawi or Osama Bin Laden, but the idea that one would associate, as it were, this most sacred symbol of Islam, the Prophet, with acts of terrorism is in effect saying, 'This is a deliberate attempt to provoke,' . I think it's very interesting that in America last weekend, on 60 Minutes, they interviewed the editor of a Dutch newspaper who on the one hand clearly defended the other newspaper in terms of freedom of expression, then immediately said himself this was clearly intended to provoke and to test Muslims and to test their position, and that is why it's not only a global thing but it says something even within Europe, its intent is also to say, 'If you really want to be a citizen, then we're going to set the norm or what citizenship means.'

TIM SEBASTIAN

OK. Let's go to a related question from Sarah Nader, please.

AUDIENCE Q (F)

Do you believe that the Muslims took the cartoons too personally, and if so explain, and if not, explain?

TIM SEBASTIAN

Shaykh Hamza Yusuf.

HAMZA YUSUF

Well, again I think one of the things that a lot of people of other faiths don't understand with the Prophet Mohammed is that Muslims still adhere to the first decalogue in the Ten Commandments, that you can't make graven images. So Muslims aren't even supposed to draw human beings, full stop, even in the most orthodox form of sharia, so drawing the Prophet, just drawing him is anathema to Muslims. I mean, they really see it as something ...

TIM SEBASTIAN

But do you think they took it too personally? That was the question.

HAMZA YUSUF

I think, you know, when you have riots in Indonesia because of the fresco at the Supreme Court that honours the Prophet Mohammed, I think you've got a problem.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Is this a yes or a no?

HAMZA YUSUF

I don't think they took it too personally, because it was deeply offensive to me as a Muslim and I entirely understand the response, I don't justify some of the results.

TIM SEBASTIAN

OK. Can I ask you, Sarah, whether you think they took it too personally?

AUDIENCE Q (F)

I'm a Christian, so of course I'll be offended if there was cartoons of Jesus or God or any prophet, because I respect all religions, but I think they have the right to be angry and offended, of course,

because it's very disrespectful, because the Prophet is very sacred for them, but they could have dealt with it in a better way.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Can we hear from some other voices around the room? You sir. Do you think Muslims over-reacted or took the cartoons too personally?

AUDIENCE Q (M)

Yes, yes. They did.

TIM SEBASTIAN

You think they did?

AUDIENCE Q (M)

I mean, everybody would take it personally.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Where are you from, can I ask?

AUDIENCE Q (M)

From Lebanon, and I took it personally but the problem is how they reacted because things could have, like in Qatar for example, some places chose to boycott Danish products, and this is a good way, but in Lebanon, they burnt the Danish embassy and they burned also a church, and this is just wrong, because they could have dealt with it in another way.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Another voice from over there. Lady in the fourth row.

AUDIENCE Q (F)

I don't think they took it personally but I think the problem here is with their reaction. I don't justify the reaction in any way, but I think they were trying to find justice, and I don't think anybody actually went up to this producer or the people who were drawing these cartoons and in any way condemned them or punished them in any way, and so I think, you know, they were just trying to get the justice. I don't think they got it in the right way, and I agree, I think by boycotting products would probably be a more reasonable way of dealing with it, but I think these people just really wanted to get justice.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Shaykh Hamza Yusuf, what do you think?

HAMZA YUSUF

Well, personally I felt that the boycott was basically collective guilt. It's the same thing that we're troubled about in other places, and so I personally was very opposed to the reaction against the Danish embassy. The Danish ambassador to Syria who just left a few months ago is a Muslim Dane, who rode his bike from Riyadh to Mecca to do Umrah "????", is a very wonderful man, Ambassador Olsen, and he was just outraged by that response, and it actually harmed a lot of Arab business people who have trade and commerce, so I just feel that it was completely unfair to blame the Danes.

TIM SEBASTIAN

OK. Lady in the second row there, if we can get a microphone to you please.

AUDIENCE Q (F)

People say that the reactions were very extremist. However, doesn't the Western world view the drawing of the cartoons as an extreme way of showing hatred towards Muslims?

TIM SEBASTIAN

John Esposito

JOHN ESPOSITO

I think one can't generalise about the Western world. I think that the problem is that some of the people that I would consider extremist and who would support this, they don't realise they're extremist. I mean, that's the difficulty. It's not as if these people were saying, 'We're extremist.' I also think one has to note that there are differences in the way in which people in the Western world responded, whether you're comparing Europe to America, or sections of Europe, in fact Hamza and I were talking about, he was with the film crew in Denmark, and you may want to just tell that story.

HAMZA YUSUF

Well, we did go there and what we found out was, the majority of Danes were actually very offended by the cartoon, and I think it was misrepresented in the Arab media when they said that they were supportive of it, they were supportive of the right to freedom of expression, but they were actually deeply offended by the religious and racial implications of the cartoon.

TIM SEBASTIAN

OK, we'll take one more view on that from the back, and then we'll move on to the next question. You, sir.

AUDIENCE Q (M)

My question is to Shaykh Hamza. Don't you think that the actions of the Muslims around the world portray an image that Islam encourages violence in a way?

HAMZA YUSUF

You know, it's really fascinating, in the 8th century Ibn Taimia (author) "??? ??????" in a book about Christianity said that one of the tragedies of the Muslims of my time is that when Christians in Syria, there was still a lot of population of them there, ask troubling questions about Islam, they say the only answer we'll give you is the sword, and he said this is the very thing they attack us of, of having our religion spread by violence, and our religion does not spread by violence, it spreads by proofs and by reason and by example. I think until the Arabs change the grammar books, Tharaba Zaidu Amrun "??? ??? ??????" which means Zayd hit Amron, and is the way every Arab child learns grammar. In America, you know, 'Jane sees Dick,' which is another problem, but I think the violence, you know, the thagafat alunf "????? ??????" you know, the culture of violence is unfortunately I think it's a little too widespread globally but in particular I think a lot of Muslims have real misunderstandings about Islam and the role of violence.

TIM SEBASTIAN

We're going to take another question please from Ahmed Somay. Would you stand up please. We'll just get a microphone to you.

AUDIENCE Q (M)

The cartoon crisis did not develop all of a sudden. They were first published in September. What does the panel think about this? Why hasn't the Muslim world reacted to it more immediately?

TIM SEBASTIAN

Diana Buttu, do you think that the delay meant that people were orchestrating the response to it, that various people wanted an extreme response? Is that partly to blame for the delay?

DIANA BUTTU

I think in some instances, yes. I think that the fact that it, first of all, I don't think the cartoon was very well known in the Arab world when it was first published in September. I think that when it began to be known a little bit more, it was largely because there were people who were interested in having it known a little bit more, and so in that regard I'm not entirely convinced ...

TIM SEBASTIAN

And in ramping up the reaction?

DIANA BUTTU

... in ramping up the reaction too, but that said, even though the reaction may have been ramped up, I go back to the point in saying that by and large the Arab and Muslim world has no other means of actually protesting against the policies of the West or in particular this particular cartoon, or in general about what is going on in the Arab and Muslim world, and so this was largely a means of actually protesting against a large number of issues, not simply the cartoon but a number of things, and it's the same case in Palestine that we saw with the occupation. The occupation has been going on for nearly 39 years. The Al-Aqsa uprising and it's interesting that it's called the Al-Aqsa uprising, started five years ago, not because the occupation started five years ago, but it was a culmination of years and years and years of oppression, of anger and so on and so forth, and that all that Israel had to do was hit a religious chord and it burst into this uprising, and similarly when it came to this cartoon, I think that there was a lot of anger brewing over what's gone on in vis-à-vis the West and the Middle East, and all that really needed to happen was hit a religious chord.

JOHN ESPOSITO

What really set things off, I think that there were people who definitely wanted to exploit the situation, but it was the spread among later European presses and it caught on. I happened to be in Denmark about 6 or 7 weeks ago, maybe 8 weeks ago, I forget, one of the books that I did on Islam came out in Danish, and what struck me was, a group of people took me to dinner at night and I was talking about Islamophobia in other parts of Europe, and they said to me - and these are people who also deal with the Middle Eastern Muslim world - they said Islamophobia here is growing very strongly, and they mentioned the cartoon, but even if they mentioned it, it was, this is a man of station but they weren't even taking it seriously. It was almost as if this is past, and certainly in America and many parts of Europe, it hadn't been noticed, so I think as we get to see European presses jumping on board, that simply stoked the fire and the reaction.

TIM SEBASTIAN

I'm interested in how people in the audience found out about the cartoons first. Was it from some Western media or from Arab media, how did you find out first of all? From the Arab media. And at what time, what point did you find out about it? How long after the cartoons? Can we get a microphone to you, yes, you.

AUDIENCE Q (F)

Actually we heard about the cartoons from the Arab media and we heard about it one month after they were published in Danish newspapers, and we don't like it at all and we find it very offensive, although that the Danish were thinking, 'This is the freedom,' but isn't any freedom actually.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Did you find it more offensive the more coverage was given to it, or did you find it pretty offensive the first time?

AUDIENCE Q (F)

I found it myself very offensive from the first time, because they shouldn't put a prophet, whether he's Mohammed or Jesus or any other prophet, they shouldn't picture him that way. That was a very offensive way. If it was Jesus, we would also feel offended, because it's still prophet, so yes.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Lady at the back has a comment. Can we get a microphone to you please. Can you stand up please and we'll get a microphone to you.

AUDIENCE Q (F)

I think that many Western people saw us as extremist because, you know, they have cartoons of Jesus and not all Christians, you know, they're OK with it, but when they saw the cartoons on Prophet Mohammed, they went, 'Oh, they're extremists,' because you know at first the cartoons about Jesus they didn't mind, and we really went wild when we saw the cartoons about Mohammed.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Desmond Tutu, Western hypocrisy I think she's talking about.

DESMOND TUTU

I wanted to say, may I say what I wanted to say?

TIM SEBASTIAN

Please.

DESMOND TUTU

Thank you very much.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Who am I to deny you?

DESMOND TUTU

Freedom of speech. I wanted to say what Professor Esposito said earlier, that in fact you want very little to provoke reaction when you are carrying the burden of an anguish, when you have a resentment at being humiliated and treated as if you were nothing. It takes very, very little. In the United States if sometimes they've been shocked at their race riots and you ask, 'What provoked

it?' and you find that the provocation actually was almost insignificant, and you say, 'Yes, you are going constantly to be shocked by these outbursts because there is a pain sitting in the tummy

...

TIM SEBASTIAN

For a long time.

DESMOND TUTU

... of all, or of most African-Americans and native Americans and until you get to exercise and bring it out with people being able to express that pain. You are constantly, constantly going to be shocked and we are going to get a kind of pain, but it's a pain that you take in with your mother's milk, as it were. It's a pain that is not cerebral, it is almost tribal. It just goes on and on until someone says, 'Let us lance the boil, let us try to deal with this and pour balm on the wound.' We are constantly going to find things that happen, outbursts, and you say but why, and many will say, 'Yes, no, we didn't think the reaction should have been so-and-so,' but that reaction is not related to the immediate cause, it is, 'I am hurting, please, I am hurting, I have been treated as if I was nothing. Can you take note of me.'

TIM SEBASTIAN

All right, thank you very much. Let's move on to another question, this was from Eisha Waqar. Please, could we have your question? And this is the last one on the cartoons.

AUDIENCE Q (F)

When the Danish government eventually met with Muslims in Denmark, they chose only to meet with the moderate Muslims. Isn't some of the extremism in Islam a result of the frustration born out of the West's desire to have dialogue only on its own terms?

TIM SEBASTIAN

John Esposito, is that a fair comment?

JOHN ESPOSITO

Yes. I can expand on that. I think that part of the problem that we have historically, I've seen it over the years, we hold conferences, whether it's governments, whether it's non-government organisations, in universities, and often we talk about people who are not in the room, and we don't invite them in the room, the alternative voices. I'm not just using the word extremist here, but alternative voices, and there are all kinds of explanations for that. 'Well, we don't want to offend their government,' or 'Well, we don't want to run the danger that they might be extremist.' This is a real issue. To give you the most bizarre example post 9/11, from my point of view, is the situation in the United States at times when you will get a phone call and somebody will say, 'We want to meet with a group of moderate Muslims, can you give me a list?' as if it's a shortlist. 'Or we have a group here that wants to go up to Congress and they're Muslim leaders. Can you look it over and let us know whether or not they're moderate Muslims?' The reality of it is that

what we have to learn when we deal with situations is that we have to talk to a broad spectrum of the population, so it means that some European countries have to talk to the Tariq Ramadans of the world, or America has to, because it's not very clear. It's one thing if you say, 'We don't want to talk to X because he actually has committed acts of, you know, terrorism against innocents,' but when you're talking about often many Muslim leaders, or just personalities whose position you don't like but they're not extremist, you really run a risk of sending in the wrong signal. If there's a dialogue, dialogue implies that it's going on between two people and if it's about a hot issue, we need to be talking about the people who are at the heart of the hot issue and not simply talking about them.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Diana Buttu, you find the West picking and choosing its interlocutors and only the moderate ones?

DIANA BUTTU

Absolutely. In fact that was the point I was going to make is that often times, particularly for those who live in the Middle East, our interlocutors are chosen for us rather than the ability to choose the interlocutor, and hence the case right now with the Palestinian elections where the Palestinians have overwhelmingly chosen Hamas, and yet there is nobody who is willing to talk to Hamas, despite that this is now the voice of the Palestinians in terms of the Palestinian Authority, and so there's a lot of, 'Well we'll talk to this person, he's much more favourable, we'll see eye to eye with him,' but what they're doing in effect is they're actually ignoring a large census or a large segment of the population for who Hamas does represent ...

TIM SEBASTIAN

You think they're just talking to them quietly behind the scenes? All the evidence suggests they are talking to them quietly behind the scenes.

DIANA BUTTU

They probably are talking to them quietly behind the scenes for reasons that I think are not necessarily in order to engage in dialogue but to calm violence down more than anything else, but I think that in so doing, what they're doing is alienating a large segment of the population, whether it's in Palestine or other parts of the Middle East or Arab world.

TIM SEBASTIAN

There's a lady two rows from the back who has had her hand up, then I'll come back to you.

AUDIENCE Q (F)

Muslims who responded so chaotically to the cartoon didn't probably have a clear idea of Islam as a religion itself, of Islam and being a spiritual religion, so I personally see it as a failure of the

Muslim leaders. I think that if the Ummah was led more towards a specific point by the actual Muslim leaders, the response would not have been that chaotic, because Islam itself does not teach extremism.

TIM SEBASTIAN

What do you think Muslim leaders should then have said?

AUDIENCE Q (F)

They would probably have taught the way to respond to such things, they would probably have pointed out the correct direction or the correct way to respond.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Is the problem a lack of central authority in Islam?

AUDIENCE Q (F)

Islam gives authority to people like mullahs and so if only those people took part and they led the population towards the right direction, I think there wouldn't have been such a chaotic response.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Shaykh Hamza Yusuf, the lack of central authority.

HAMZA YUSUF

It's a major problem because Islam in its classical formation recognises the idea of a caliphate. In the absence of the caliphate, it's just open game in terms of religious authority, so it's a real problem and we're suffering from it. My understanding in the Islam that I studied is there is a normative Islam. There is an Islam that is agreed upon by what they call the Sunnis ("??? ????? ? ??????") as well as the Shia formation, they have their own sharia, have their own understanding of that and authority, and the ayatollahs are doing a better job. I mean, you can see that Ayatollah Sistani, for instance, has had an immense influence in Southern Iraq in terms of maintaining some order. On the other hand, the Sunni tradition has in a lot of ways been deracinated by the fact that the great teaching institutions like El Azhar university (?????) and Al Qarawe'en institute (???????) although is being reinvigorated by the Moroccans, and Zaytuna in Tunisia, these great teaching institutions that produced really high calibre scholars no longer exist, and so people in the Arab world know that you get great grades you go to medical school, good grades, engineering, reasonable grades do agriculture or political science, and really bad grades, you go to Islamic sharias, college. So we've got a lot of third-rate unfortunately, and with respect to people and their abilities, but we have a lot of people that are just not up for the level of challenge in the religious sphere.

Are the extremists ever right?

TIM SEBASTIAN

Can I just say also that we would like to hear from the UN panel as well, so if you have comments to make, please don't be shy, we'd very much like to hear your views as well. One final view on the cartoons. You've got another view, OK. All right, we'll move to another question please from Muna Babikir.

AUDIENCE Q (F)

My question was, what about extremism. Do you think extremists like all those extremists are wrong or are they right at some point?

TIM SEBASTIAN

Diana Buttu, you seemed to suggest that they could be right at some point. At least you were offering understanding.

DIANA BUTTU

I think I go back to my initial point, which is I think it's very difficult to define what extremism is, because it implies that there is a norm and that norm is normally set by the more powerful party. That's how I think that it's understandable why certain acts take place that people would define as extremism, and it's understandable, particularly in the place where I live and where I see such acts taking place, I do understand why it's happening. It's happening in a political context, it's not happening in the absence of a political context. It's happening because people have been denied their freedom for such a long period of time, and so while I understand it, that doesn't necessarily mean that I agree with it, and I think that the key to actually ending acts of extremism, if there can be such a definition, is to understand it and to try to put into place measures to actually address people's grievances. And unfortunately what we've been caught up in is definitions and more and more definitions, rather than a lack of understanding and an attempt to actually address it in a means that will address and underline causes of extremism.

TIM SEBASTIAN

OK, Desmond Tutu, you were labelled as an extremist in your time, weren't you, plenty of times?

DESMOND TUTU

Yes. I think again Professor Esposito was right in saying, I mean, contexts are important but the question was, are the extremists right? I think there is a measure of truth and often a great measure of truth. It is that it tends to say it is the only truth and everything else is wrong, and so I would just hope that one day we can become the kind of people who say, 'Yes, I don't actually agree with you but I will defend your right to your point of view and I won't want to clobber you for holding your point of view.' If we could, what an incredible world, how incredibly rich this world would be if we got to accepting that none of us can ever be totally self-sufficient. The way God created us was deliberately to create us as those who need one another. We were created for interdependence. You have gifts that I don't have, and I have gifts you don't have,' and you could

almost see God rubbing God's hands and saying, 'Voilà! Now you know that you need the other in order to be fully complete.'

TIM SEBASTIAN

Right, there's a gentleman up there, could you stand up please, sir, and we'll get a microphone to you and then we'll come to the panel.

AUDIENCE Q (M)

I would like to see the UN treating the problems. For example when treating the disease, an illness, you don't want to ameliorate the problems, you want to treat it, you want to eradicate it. All this time we're talking about extreme actions, we're talking about Muslims going extreme and killing, and of course it's wrong. We're talking about Palestinians blowing up innocent civilians, we're talking about, why don't we talk about why is that happening, why don't we talk about for example what happened in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1992 to 1995. Now, why did that happen? I would like to say, and this can be argued, but as was suggested on the floor, the acts of extremism come from two directions, either from those who are extremely anguished, trying to achieve their freedom and rights, or from those who have huge amounts of greed, so ladies and gentlemen, I would truly and honestly like to see the world treating the problems at their roots, not actions that come as a result of them.

TIM SEBASTIAN

And how would you suggest the UN group therefore goes about its work?

AUDIENCE Q (M)

I'm currently studying so I'm acquiring intelligence, I'm learning how to treat these problems. I have my own opinion on it.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Well, they're here, you have a chance to give them some advice.

AUDIENCE Q (M)

I would like the world to realise why Muslims are angry. I mean, as was suggested, it's been bottling up. There's a lot of oppressions of Muslims all around the world, not only Muslims, I mean, Christians also, as you said, minorities, how we treat minorities is a degree of our democracy, and I'm sorry to say but I have experienced it first-hand. I am a Bosnian and I have seen, even though I was a majority, I have seen how I was treated.

TIM SEBASTIAN

John Esposito.

JOHN ESPOSITO

I take very seriously what you said and I think there has to be a kind of two-pronged approach. I think one, you do have to look at what the root causes are, and often the way people get around dealing with serious situations of injustice is to just say they're a bunch of extremists, as if therefore they're just irrational. You have to deal with root causes and I think that members of

the Alliance certainly are concerned about this as many in the room are, but I also think that something that, to follow up on what Archbishop Tutu said and also what the rabbi said earlier, there's the positive constructive side. If we're going to talk about creating a better world and it's for your generation to do it, on the one hand, when you see injustice, you have to look at what are the political, socio-economic root causes. At the same time we have to begin to promote a world that takes globalisation and pluralism very seriously, a world in which we really do be able to say we can agree to disagree, a world which can say, 'You can hold your beliefs as firmly as you want, religious, political, and I can hold mine, but I can also understand where you're coming from, I can make that effort and I can respect your right to believe that way,' and so it's got to be a two-pronged approach, it seems to me, in a sense, you know, an immediate as well as a long-term.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Let's go on to a question from Ayesha Butt please.

AUDIENCE Q (F)

Do you not feel the whole generation has been lost to extremism because extremism is seen as a logical response to the injustices suffered by Muslims at the hands of the West, and do you also not feel that until those injustices are addressed, extremism will remain a part of the Islamic identity?

TIM SEBASTIAN

Shaykh Hamza Yusuf, that follows on from what Desmond Tutu was saying.

HAMZA YUSUF

Yes, I think it's a good question. I think in some ways, you know, we're still dealing, just as the native Americans in the US are a traumatised nation still, despite the fact that, you know, a lot of that trauma occurred over 100 years ago, but it's still going on, and I think a lot of people are very unaware of actually what took place and what continues to take place, and if you look, you know, and excuse the use of this, but in a Marxist analysis, you know, the idea of power is in the means of production and the state, and Gramsci, the Italian, added the hegemony of culture, and I think that one of the things that's really overwhelming for the Muslims and why you're getting really radical responses is that the culture of the West which was not really, it never colonised the Muslim world in any real way, there was a military presence, but the Muslims still had their culture intact. Now you have a real onslaught of culture and there's an incredible amount of cognitive dissonance amongst Muslims and a lot of the more religiously informed, they just don't know how to deal with it. How do you deal with MTV? You know, how does a devout Muslim deal with MTV and the fact that his children are watching this, I just, I don't, you know, there's a beautiful Arab poem, you know, "??? ??? ??? ??? ???? ?? ?? ??? ?? ???? ??????" We're living in an age of such extremes that the one who's not driven mad by it is not sane.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Let me go back to the question and ask you whether you feel that the generation has been lost. Could you stand up please?

AUDIENCE Q (F)

Well, partly. I mean, like you said, through MTV and everything, everyone is influenced by these things, specially through Western clothes and stuff like that, so yes, partly it has been lost. I mean, we try to keep our Islamic culture in there but with influences like from TV and from Western culture, things keep coming in, you can't stop that, you can't stop the changes.

TIM SEBASTIAN

There's a gentleman four rows back, could you stand up please, sir? Lost generation?

AUDIENCE Q (M)

The problem is that I don't think the youth today have meaningful avenues and forums where they can carry out meaningful debate and discussions much like this forum here. I think that's a major problem. The Muslim youth can't express their frustration in any other way except violence. I think the main point that we should bring out is that we should foster an environment that encourages this debate and not necessarily saying that I agree that you're right, which is what Mr. Tutu was saying, but 'I think that you're wrong,' but in a respectful way. For example a Muslim can never accept that the Trinity is the truth, but somebody may hold that to be a truth but at the end of the day, we should be able to walk away as human beings, as brothers in humanity, so I don't think that eliminating this form of extremism is necessarily accepting that every truth is correct, it's just fostering an environment that allows debate.

TIM SEBASTIAN

OK. Diana Buttu, how much possibilities are there for open debate in the Gaza Strip?

DIANA BUTTU

Debate in the Gaza Strip is becoming very lively. It was something that, in Palestine in general there's always been a very lively discussion over politics of the area and politics of the region, but largely what you saw happening was that it was mostly about politics of the region and not internal domestic discourse. There was no real dialogue or debate about what was happening inside Palestine and more about the Israeli occupation, the larger Arab world and less about internal debate and discourse. What's been very interesting over the course of the past few years is that as Palestinian society becomes more fragmented and separated from Israeli society as a result of the occupation and so on and so forth, that there is becoming a much more vivid internal debate and dialogue that is taking place on different levels, everything from the emergence of Hamas and why it emerged, to what's happening with the other political factions, to the role of Islam in the state and so on and so forth, and so it is a very lively debate, despite the fact that Palestinians are by and large denied their freedom.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Desmond Tutu, you wanted to come in here.

DESMOND TUTU

I want to say two things. I am glad that young people like you are outraged, are outraged by all of the awful things that do happen. It's fantastic that you care, and I would say, yes, I mean, you have many things that are against you, but one of the most wonderful things about young people, yourselves, is that you are such idealistic creatures, and why you care, why you are outraged is

your belief that this world can be in fact a better place And I'm glad that there are young people like you. I'm appalled, I mean, that you should be talking of lost generations and things of that kind. You ain't lost generations, you're fantastic people and I'm glad you're around and I wish I was maybe like, no, no, you know ...

TIM SEBASTIAN

You 're going to hold that thought, are you?

DESMOND TUTU

No, no, I really want to say this to you. You are God's most outstanding collaborators for turning this world into a better place.

(APPLAUSE)

JOHN ESPOSITO

I would just note that the Alliance in our discussions just yesterday recognised the importance, not only importance of young people but what we said earlier, that young people need more situations in which they can talk about what's important to them and which they can take, as it were, have more input and take control, so I think the more you assert that, realise that that's important but also realise that there are those who recognise that avenues need to be opened up for that, just as this kind of programme.

TIM SEBASTIAN

On the subject, question there from the panel. If you could stand up.

KAREN ARMSTRONG (Alliance of Civilizations member)

When I talk to British or American youth, what I say is that perhaps my generation can't sort this out. I've been in the business now of talking about Islam to Western audiences, and every time something happens like the cartoon crisis, we go right back to the beginning again, and have to start answering the same old questions, nothing ever seems to stick, our minds are set, but the good news is that we are being gradually, by natural processes, phased out, and you are young enough to change your minds, to have new thoughts. You've seen what extremism can do, you've seen it at first hand. The Chinese call the insistence that only one point of view is right 'obsession', these are the Chinese religious thinkers, to have only one point of view, to say, 'This cannot mean that, there can only be one right, this is an obsession'. You are young enough to have a new idea, to change the world by thinking critically and participating. We should give you more avenues to speak and to think and make your views heard. We are very concerned about this on the Alliance and it's been wonderful to listen to you today, with views that you can share with us, but go on thinking, don't ever stop questioning.

What can Muslim women do to fight the rise of extremism?

TIM SEBASTIAN

I want to go to a question which actually follows up exactly on that thought, and this is from Amber Tariq please.

AUDIENCE Q (F)

What do you believe that Muslim women can do within their communities to fight the rise of extremism within this region?

TIM SEBASTIAN

What can Muslim women do in their homes and in their communities to fight the rise of extremism? Diana Buttu.

DIANA BUTTU

Women can do a number of things. One is to be engaged in their communities and in their societies.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Engaged in what way?

DIANA BUTTU

Engaged in all different types of levels.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Some examples.

DIANA BUTTU

For example, on a political level. Women's involvement does not have to end at a certain area and begin in a certain area. For example, women can get involved in the political spectrum. I've been involved in the political arena. You can get, women can get involved in social arenas, community service, charitable organisations. They can get involved even just on the level of home maintenance, of maintaining and raising children who are going to then become also productive members of society. I think there's a number of means of combating what is largely defined as extremism, but the real challenge is, is that space going to be provided to women or are they constantly going to have to fight for that arena, to be able to have their voices heard.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Shaykh Hamza Yusuf, advice to Muslim women in their homes.

HAMZA YUSUF

Well, I think that one of the most important things to recognise is that we really get our humanity from our mothers. In Arabic the word for mercy is rooted in the word for womb, and Islam is a mercy, and I think that that starts with particularly the mother, so it's really important to empower our women and create environments in the home that are nurturing, and also one of the major problems that is directly related to this is the alienation that a lot of extremists feel. There's an immense amount of alienation vis-à-vis the other, and this is a problem within modern theological Islam, the idea of the 'kafir' who is, his rights are almost entirely removed, the idea of what some of the jurists call *ibahat aldam* ("????? ???) or the permissibility of shedding blood. I mean, these are real problematic issues.

TIM SEBASTIAN

But some concrete advice to Muslim women in their homes.

HAMZA YUSUF

Well, I think it's important there needs to be deeply nurturing environments, but also there needs to be from the husbands and the brothers, there also needs to be that nurturing. The Koran says, when the daughter is asked why she was buried alive, there's more ways to bury a woman alive than physically. You know, a lot of our women I think are buried alive in the Islamic community and that needs to change.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Could we hear from some young Muslim women perhaps involved in their communities in fighting extremism, anybody who particularly feels they should get involved in fighting extremism, can we hear from anybody who might have a view on that, anybody got a view on that?

AUDIENCE Q (F)

Well, I'd like to get involved but the thing is, I don't know how I can get involved without going around offending someone or like within the rights of my freedom. Like with my Dad it was very nice of him to allow me to come here today, but I don't know how much further I could actually go without offending anyone or being allowed to.

TIM SEBASTIAN

This is a common problem, isn't it?

HAMZA YUSUF

I think it is. You know, our societies, Western society is very different in a lot of ways, and the Arabic word for woman is hurma (????) which is like a sanctuary, it's something seen by the Arabs as something you protect, and the worst thing you can call an Arab male is dayuth (????) which is somebody who has no concern for women, so, you know, traditionally Arab culture is a very chivalrous culture. Unfortunately chivalry can become something else. It can transform into quite negative, you know, this mad jealousy and this kind of insane desire for this authoritarian despotic model which is very common, and I think that we need to undermine that model, because I think that the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) was not a despotic person. His women spoke back to him and he did not rebuke them for it. Aisha is a startling and stunning woman, if you study her life, his wife was a very vibrant woman, and I think if we study the early women of Islam, you will really find that they were just dynamic women. They were out there, you know, leading armies. They were fighting in battles, they were establishing charity organisations. Over 40% of the Ottoman endowments are endowed by women, I mean, we have this as record, and Sheikha Mozah, I think is very much in that tradition and we honour her for that.
(APPLAUSE)

TIM SEBASTIAN

Are there any other women who would like to get more involved in combating extremism but don't feel they can, they feel restricted?

AUDIENCE Q (F)

With me it's probably cultural restrictions. I personally come from Pakistan where people are religious but on the other hand, when religion allows a certain thing, the culture comes back and says, 'No, you're not allowed to do that,' so for me culture has a bigger influence. I'm now currently involved in the Reach Out to Asia charity team and I might be going to Pakistan. My parents allow me to go. On the other hand, my other family members believe it's a bad thing, me as a female going with males alone in another country, so it's more of a cultural thing as well when it comes over religious beliefs.

JOHN ESPOSITO

But I think one of the realities of empowerment, if you look at some Muslim women today, is that there are two general ways you can be empowered. One is to wait for men to empower you, the other is to realise that part of the way in which you become empowered is to empower yourself, and that's one of the I think ...

TIM SEBASTIAN

Easy for you to say, isn't it?

HAMZA YUSUF

There's a really important point, the Koranic language was almost entirely male until one of the women actually complained about it. She went to the prophet and she said, 'Why are these verses all talking about men?' All the verses that came after that complaint were men and women, believing men, believing women thakar and untha (??? ?????)and so I think it does take, I mean, I agree that it's going to take some effort, but it also needs to be done with cultural sensitivity, so it's not, you know, it doesn't create fitna ("????") or social disorder.

JOHN ESPOSITO

And there are models across the Muslim world, so you know, if you look around, there are Muslim women there who demonstrate this as a form of empowerment whether it's Koran study, whether it's prayer groups, whether it's NGO's, whether it's education. I think that, you know, you can see that, you can see it here, if you look at the role of women, the emerging role of women in this society.

On what basis does the UN think they will listen to this new forum?**TIM SEBASTIAN**

All right, we've come to a question which puts the UN on the spot here. The question is from Grant Guenther, could we have your question please.

AUDIENCE Q (M)

Since extremist groups operating in the world today pay so little heed to what world leaders say about extremism, on what basis does the UN think they will listen to this new forum?

TIM SEBASTIAN

Would anybody in the front row like to answer that? On what basis does the UN think they will listen to your new forum? Would anybody like to take that question?

FEDERICO MAYOR - Co-Chair of the Alliance Of Civilizations

The UN is United Nations, it's not an institution, in the Manhattan Island, and very often we address the problems of the world and immediately we say United Nations is not doing well. Those that are not doing well is those that represent in the United Nations the most important nations of the world, and precisely at the initiative of the Secretary General, we are now trying to reinforce the role that the United Nations have. I like to repeat very often that the charter of the United Nations starts saying, 'We, the peoples, we, the peoples,' not 'We, the government' or 'We, the winners of the war.'

TIM SEBASTIAN

There's no shortage of fine words, is there.

FEDERICO MAYOR

Yes.

TIM SEBASTIAN

This is the point.

FEDERICO MAYOR

The fine work must be done by the nations that instead of weakening the United Nations as an institution, instead of not following the resolutions of the United Nations and not providing the resources, human and financial resources, this ...

TIM SEBASTIAN

But fine words are not enough, are they, as the United Nations has proved. You have a fine charter to which all the members have signed up, but 50% of your member countries allow torture on a daily basis.

FEDERICO MAYOR

No, I disagree. The United Nations is a design of one President of the United States, of Roosevelt, and in the system they have nutrition, health, education, so it's a fantastic design, and it's based on some principles that were enshrined in the Declaration of 1945.

TIM SEBASTIAN

OK, but to go back to the question, what makes you think that people are going to listen to you? You come up with ideas to combat extremism, what makes you think that anybody is going to listen?

FEDERICO MAYOR

Yes, precisely I was trying to answer to this because what we cannot imagine is that to combat extremism, one of the audience said what are the roots of what we are saying? Here we are talking about extremism, this is the first thing, and I as a scientist, I say you that only 3% of the young people has been extremists or violent in the case that we are discussing. 97% of the young people, and these were some data that were given to us yesterday, have been of course offended but they have not been violent.

TIM SEBASTIAN

What I'm trying to discover is what your group is going to do that will be different, and why your group will be listened to when other groups haven't been in the past. I think that was the nature of your question, wasn't it, really?

FEDERICO MAYOR

Yes, but this is his question that I'm going to answer but when you talk about United Nations, we are one group that has been the result of the Secretary General appointment but we do not represent the United Nations. It is for this that I was talking what is the United Nations and why we must reinforce the United Nations. Now, concerning our group, we have been this morning established very clearly that what we want is to link and to establish bridges with the divide that exists today.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Such as? What kind of bridges?

FEDERICO MAYOR

For example to know better the other. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu said before, first of all we must consider that we have not all the truth, and the first action is to listen to the others, and for this we must consider many misconceptions that today we have from the others, and when we are talking for example about Islam, we must not talk only about the Arab countries, but the Islamic ...

TIM SEBASTIAN

So when you submit your report, what is the best that we can hope for from you, what is the best that the world can hope for from you?

FEDERICO MAYOR

I think that the most important thing that we are going to suggest to the Secretary General to recommend is to make a very vast interchange of young people of universities, of scientists, of the media, of all those situations in the world that today are isolated.

TIM SEBASTIAN

OK, let me ask the questioner if he's encouraged by your answer. Are you encouraged by that answer?

AUDIENCE Q (M)

I'm encouraged by that but I'm also encouraged by some other ideas in the room, like I'm trying to foster, you know, talking between other people in the region and trying to understand one another, because I think that's one of the main problems is that people don't understand, they don't accept, and what they don't accept, they fear. And so I think combating that will help us resolve much of the problems that we're facing today.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Would you like to have a final word on this?

DESMOND TUTU

I think the world is aware it is in a mess, and because it is in a mess, they are going to have to listen and they are going to listen in part because what we are seeking to communicate is what we have lived as a group. See, this group (the AOC) is not monochrome. This group does not come from one country. This group does not represent just one philosophy, religion. It's people with very diverse views and you would have thought that they would not even make it to first base in terms of being able to understand one another. I am a Christian, there's a Muslim, there's a Jew, we speak all kinds of languages, but if you take my language, being colonised I could understand English, and yet we were able to come to a consensus. We disagreed, I mean, we spoke vigorously. I mean, today actually I thought somebody was about to chew up the co-chair, because I mean, this day they were really insisting this point and this point must be in your community, but in the end, it's remarkable, I mean, that we kept being able to find one another, and if it can happen, yes, it happened at a small scale, the chances are that it can happen on a broad scale. And there are other examples that each one of us is able to bring. I can bring the example of a South Africa that people thought was going to explode, but there we got an example of people finding each other, so one is able to say, you know, an enemy is a friend wanting to be made, and that's not just a facile sort of slogan, it is for real, and if the world doesn't know that it is in a mess, wow!

TIM SEBASTIAN

Diana Buttu, a brief word.

DIANA BUTTU

I think that in this age, we've been largely examining what's wrong with the UN, and we focused on is it the right mandate, is it the right this, is it the right that, but I think if I were to sum up what I think can happen with the UN is, if we transform the United Nations from being the United Nations to that of United People and take the words of the charter and rather than having the charter focus on United Nations being a collective group of nations that implement or don't implement in that case the will of the people, that we actually transform it from being the focus on nations to that of the people itself, and I think once we're able to focus on what the needs of people themselves are, then I think we'll be able to create a much more different world. How can that be done? I think if we ignore the nation state model that has been largely focused on over the course of the past century, instead start focusing on the needs of people. Unfortunately in this era that we're facing now, the needs of many people are not in fact addressed by the United Nations because it is a form that solely focuses on the rights of one state versus another state, and the impact of one state's actions on another state's actions, and I think that we really need to go down to the grass roots level and start focusing on the idea of the United People and that is a global people.

TIM SEBASTIAN

All right, we're running out of time and my panel is telling me that they have to get away. It just remains for me to thank all of our distinguished panellists for coming today. Thank you very much to the audience for coming, and hope to see you again. Thank you very much indeed.

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/Doha-Debates#sthash.JcN6I4he.dpuf>

Transcript for Description of the Prophet(SAW)

Transcript Details

Event Name: Description of the Prophet(SAW)

Transcript Author: Unknown

Description: I'm not sure where this was found

Date Transcribed: 1/1/2000 12:00:00 AM

Original URL:

One of the calamities of religions is when the Messenger becomes exalted over the One who sent him. We do not believe the Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) is divine. We have been given the gift of understanding the Messenger in relation to the One who sent him. The Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) is central to teachings of Islam. You cannot exalt the Creator without exalting His Messenger, and you cannot exalt His Message without exalting His Messenger. We are commanded by God to magnify the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam). Shaykh Hamza Yusuf eloquently explains why we must celebrate the Prophet every day of our lives. He also adds at the end an elucidating explanation of how Muslims should emulate the behaviour the Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) had during trying times, reminding us that Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) taught. The believer is one from whose evil humanity is safe and that he was sent only as a mercy to everyone.

Love (mahabba) for people arises from three characteristics: 1) their physical outward beauty, 2) their inward beautiful character, and 3) the good or the sacrifice they do for us. To increase and maintain his love for the Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam), Sayyidina Hassan (the Prophet's grandson) sought descriptions of all three of these aspects of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) because he wanted something to hold on to. Adding his own commentary to these intimate descriptions, Shaykh Hamza, with his usual eloquence, passionately relates what Sayyidina Hassan gathered about the Beloved of Allah. Shaykh Hamza says if you knew what the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) did for you, you would fall in love with him and explains that mahabba grows like a seed. For those who desire to fall in love with the Beloved of Allah, this talk is for them.

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

CD 1

Hasan ibn Ali asked his maternal uncle Hind bin Abi Haalah about the description of the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam). He said about his uncle that he was very capable of describing, he had given an excellent description of the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam). He said “I desired to hear this description from him because I wanted something to hold onto”.

One of things about the ulema, they say mahaba (love) for most human beings arises out of three things. The first is the physical love. You see something beautiful and your heart inclines towards it. So He put the love of beauty in the hearts of human beings. If you see something beautiful, you incline towards it. Your eye delights in it. If you see a human being that is beautiful, you can fall in love, it can happen just from sight. The ulema have maintained the physical description of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) because that is a level of mahaba – to actually hear how beautiful he was. He was the most beautiful human being. He was more beautiful than Yusuf. One of the gifts of this ummah is that we have an exact description of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam), it is as if you are looking at him. There was a desire to keep the description of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) so people could have a physical attraction to him as well as the first stage of love.

The second type of love comes when you hear about the beautiful qualities. You have outward beauty and inward beauty which is akhlaq. They moved to the akhlaq of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) and the next level of love is love you feel for somebody who has done good to you or that you find out somebody made a sacrifice for you. If somebody does good to a good person, they love them more and more for that reason. But other people, if you do good to them, they have envy and start feeling resentment towards that person because their heart is diseased. So they actually get sick because they feel indebted and they do not like to feel indebted so they begin to use strategies in themselves to not feel indebted to the person. These are the sick people, this is why the munafiqun are the sickest people, they are in the lowest place. If people do good to you, human hearts by nature love those who do good to them. If somebody does good to you and then you do not have love for them it is because your heart is not in a natural state. It is in a diseased state.

If you knew what the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) did for you, you would fall in love with him. Not just for you, but for humanity. His concern was not just for his sahaba, his family. Most human beings, their concern is limited. Their concern might be their wife, children, husband, family, extended family. Some people, their concern is the community. They care about

the poor people in the community. They want to find them and help them because it is about the heart. The bigger the heart, the more capacity for love. The smaller the heart, the lower the capacity for love. It grows like a seed. Haba is seed in Arabic. That is the nature of mahaba, the bigger it gets the bigger the heart has to be to bear the love. There are people whose love extends to the ummah. Their concerns are the concerns of the ummah. They think about people in other places. Umar said his concern was for animals. He said “if an animal was being unjustly wronged in Iraq, I would feel concern for it”. That was his responsibility. The Messenger of Allah felt concern for all of humanity and this is why he went to non muslims. He was not doing dawah to the muslims. He was concerned about the people who had not heard of Islam. This is why he used to go and get literally what most people would call humiliation. He was a Sharif from the aristocratic clan of Quraysh. He was going to the Ghifaris to the lowest tribes on the peninsula and talking to them about Islam, humbling himself before them bearing patiently.

The physical description is what he is talking about initially.

- He was very awe inspiring when you saw him.
- He was monumental, grand in nature when you saw him.
- His face was like a moon on laylatul badr. It had a light coming out of it like a moon on laylatul badr.
- He was taller than a moderate build but not exceedingly tall. If you see somebody very tall then it is strange even amongst tall people. If you see somebody short then it is also noticeable. He was of a middle stature inclining towards height because everything about him was middle.
- Even his physical description of colour was middle. He was not pasty white and he was not black. He was inclining towards light skin because of the racism of human beings. That is one of the hikmah of that. He was inclining towards light skin because of the racism of human beings. It has to do with the stupidity of human beings in distinguishing between people because of colour. He was a colour like what we call the harvest moon. He was not white nor dark, he was light skinned what we would call in English, a reddy complexion.
- His hair was neither straight or curly. It was wavy, it was middle. Everything about him was middle. He had a full head and his hair was wavy. If he parted it, it parted. It never went past the lobe of his ears if he allowed it to grow long because sometimes he would cut it for ibadah like the umrah or hajj. It went to the lobe or in some riwayat it went to the shoulder.

- He did not speak slow or fast. He spoke in a moderate tone. His words were neither too short nor excessive but they were always just right. When he spoke, people felt as if exactly the right amount of words were used. Everything about him was moderation.
- He had a large forehead which is an indication of high quality. He had a vein on his forehead. If he got upset they could see the vein.
- His eyebrows were full and there was a slight space between them.
- The upper part of his nose was aquiline. He had a beautiful nose that had a bridge on the upper part. He had a light that came from that area of his face that was clearly discernible.
- He had a full beard and his eyes were very dark.
- He had high beautiful cheek.
- He had a mouth that was full so when he spoke his pronunciation was perfect.
- His teeth were beautiful, there was a slight space in the teeth.
- He had a light hair on his chest which was manliness without having a lot of hair.
- His neck was like a gazelle's neck. He had a beautiful neck and a high neck. It had like a beautiful silvery clarity to it.
- He was balanced in all of his outward aspects. He had a strong build and it was all perfectly formed.
- His stomach and chest were equal. He never had a large stomach. He had no paunch. Even when he was in his sixties, his stomach was always flat. He had light hair on his stomach. He had no hair over his breasts.
- He was full chested and his shoulders were broad. He had large bones.
- He had hair on his arms and he was sinewy and strong.
- There was a space in his trachea.
- His limbs were strong and he had full calves.

His feet were very smooth. Because they were desert people and they walked a lot, their feet would have a lot of roughness to them. His feet were smooth that water would pour off them.

- When he walked, he walked softly but he was quick paced as if he was walking on an incline.
- When he looked at somebody, he did not just move his head, he turned his entire body to give full attention to that person.
- He looked more at the ground than he did up. His glance was generally down because of the power of his glance. When he looked at people, he did not maintain his stare. He would look then move away. As he looked at people, he never fixed his focus on people because of the effect that would have on people.

He said to him “describe to me how he spoke”. He said “he was always grief stricken” but the ulema who commented on that hadith have said that does not mean he was depressed. It means if you looked at him in the masjid you would think he was grief stricken because his presence with his Lord was so intense that his face would have a sense of being completely absorbed in thought. So people who would look at him would think he had grief. There is another hadith that says the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) was always happy. The ulema say when he was with his Creator he was in a deep state of contemplation, when he was with his people he was happy. He smiled, he always looked at people, smiled and made them feel joyful. He never made them feel depressed. He laughed at what they laughed at.

He told jokes. Aisha said “he was always joking with us in the house”. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said “I joke but I never tell a lie in my jokes, always I speak the truth”. A man came to the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) and said “let me borrow a camel”. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said “I will give you the baby of a she camel”. He said “what would that benefit me, a baby of a she camel”. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said “Isn’t that the baby of a she camel?”. Another time a Jewess came up to him and said “O Rasulullah! Am I going to jannah?”. He said “Old women do not go to paradise”. She became so upset then he laughed and said “you will go in young and youthful” and then she was happy. A man came the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) and said “I slept with my wife in Ramadhan and I made an oath I would not do that”. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) asked “why did you do that?”. He said “I saw my wife in the moonlight and I could not help myself”. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) laughed at the man and said “go and do the expiation”. That was his nature, even when people came in a state of sin. He was showing this man his humanity by letting him feel that he just made a mistake. He made them realise that the doors of rahmah are open. That is why to make people despair of the mercy of the Lord, these are evil people who do that. The hadith that says those who say “Allah will not forgive you,

He will send that person to hell”. Do not judge people and do not say you know where Allah’s mercy is, barakah is, none of that. Who do we think we are? We do not know anything, nothing, we have no knowledge. Do not elevate yourself over Allah. You do not know who is going where. You do not know where you are going. So do not assume other people are going where you do not even know where you are going. We have big hopes in Allah.

- He was always reflecting. He did not take rest like other people. He was concerned about his ummah.
- He never spoke about anything that was unnecessary. He had long periods of silence. He used to open his words and close them with a full expression when he spoke. He spoke with comprehensive words. He never had excess. He was never at a loss for words. If he spoke, he would put his right thumb into his left palm.
- He had soft and gentle character. He was not harsh. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) was not harsh. “If you were harsh hearted they would have fled from around you”. He was not gruff or harsh ever.
- He always elevated the blessing even if it was a minute blessing.
- He never found fault in anything even in a small amount of food. Any type of food that was given to eat he did not find fault in it nor did he excessively praise it.
- If he got upset, it never put him in a state of agitation. He never got upset for himself nor did he ever seek any redress wrong done to him.
- There was never a time when a right was presented to him that he would go to fulfil that right.
- He did not point with his finger, he pointed with his whole hand.
- He would say SubhanAllah.

Most of his laughing was smiling. He rarely laughed the way most people laughed. He smiled but when he smiled his teeth were like hailstones. Then Hassan said “I did not tell Hussein ibn Ali about this (because he was young) finally I told him about it and I found he had actually got it before me”. He had asked his father Ali about how the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) went in and out of his house and what his majlis was like, what he looked like. He did not leave anything I had out and then Hussein said “I asked my father about the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam), how he came in his house”. When he went in. he went with

permission into a place. He gave three parts. He gave a part to Allah, a portion to his family and a portion for his nafs. He used to give a portion of that between the people and him. He would leave that upto the general people for the elect of the people. He never kept anything from them.

In his seerah, he would preferred the people of fadl but with their permission. So when he would give things, if they were older he would always give them things. If there was somebody of virtue he would take permission from the person of haq to give it to that person so even when Ibn Abbas was young, he took permission from him to give to the older people. Ibn Abbas refused because he wanted the barakah. But that was his nature to always take permission from somebody who had a right to give it to somebody who had the fadl or the virtue.

He would always occupy people in what benefited them and the ummah. He would ask about them. He would ask news about them. If somebody was not there, he would say “where is so and so?”. These are teachings for the people. Now we have people disappear and nobody remembers them. They do not ask about them. This is the messenger of Allah and he had an ummah. This was a whole ummah of people. The old woman who used to clean the masjid. She used to sweep the masjid. One day she died and they buried her. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) came and asked about her. They said “she died O Rasulallah”. He said “Why didn’t you tell me she died so I could go pray on her?”.

He would ask about somebody who was not there and say “tell me about people in need who are not able to come and ask me”. He told them “those people who help other people who are not able to go and get help, Allah will make firm their feet on the day of judgment”. Looking after people, taking care of people, he was teaching people how to be human beings. This is all it is. We are just learning, it is like human beings do not know how it is to be human. This is all just to teach you to be human beings. The beginning is to force yourself until it becomes your nature. It is not easy. Being human is the highest thing in creation. There is nothing higher, it is higher than the angels. That is the maqam of Bani Adam that if you fulfill your humanity you are higher than the angels and if you do not then you are lower than the animals because you had the potential. The animal could only be what it was made to be. You can go either up or down.

They used to come in seeking and go out guides. What a beautiful description of his majlis. That people come in looking and go out showing other people what to find what they were looking for.

- He never spoke except with what concerned him.
- He always brought people together and never separated them.

- He would honour the dignatories of every people and put him over those people.
- He guarded himself with people and he was vigilant because of the makar of those people.
- The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) knew human nature and he knew what people were upto but never by being rude. He would still always smile.
- He would seek out his companions.
- He would consider what was beautiful beautiful and he would show people it was a good thing. What was foul, he would show it to be foul. He would make it look insignificant to them, not worth doing.
- He was always moderate and never departed from that quality.
- He would never be weary of a people when people were speaking he would never lose his attention out of fear that they would lose their attention and get bored. He was always present with them.
- He was ready for anything and everything.
- The best people for him were the ones who benefited and were the most sincere. The ones he had the highest estimation for were the ones who served the most, helped others and consoled others. Those were the people who he looked at not those sitting around and doing nothing. Sometimes everybody looks at those who serve as the low ones, that is why they are doing the khidmah. That is why the old woman in the mosque, maybe people thought she was not very significant but she was in khidmah.
- He gave all of the people who sat with him full attention so that each one of them thought they were the most important person in the majlis. “I was sent to perfect noble character”.
- If somebody got angry in his presence or had some need and was forceful, he would be patient with him and he would do that to the point where that man would end up being calm or forgetting about what he wanted because he was so patient.
- If anybody asked him anything he never refused. If they did not get specifically what they wanted they went out with words of wisdom and consolation from him. He encompassed all of these people with his character. He was like a father to them and they were all the same as far as he was concerned in rights. Only he saw differences in taqwa.

His majlis was a majlis of clemency, modesty, sabr, trustworthiness, never were voices raised, never were anything that was holy and sacred in any way desacrilised, all of them were humbled in his presence.

- Always he honoured the older and had mercy on the younger. They would help those in need and they had special compassion for strangers and guests.

Then he said “I asked him about his qualities when he sat with people”.

- He was always smiling, he had gentle character. He was always kind and gentle with people. He was not harsh or coarse.
- He never shouted. He did not use foul language.
- He rarely found fault, if he did it was to point out something that was harmful.
- He was not excessively praiseworthy, it does not mean he did not praise, he did not do praise that was not warranted.
- He would tell people to encourage them and speak highly of people to encourage. He did not flatter.
- If he did not like something, he would act as if he did not notice it. No one ever despaired of him.

There were three things that were not part of his nature: 1. Ostentation, 2. Excessiveness and 3. Things that did not concern him. He left three things that he did not do to people 1. He never blamed anybody 2. He never found fault and 3. When he spoke people in his gathering lowered their heads as if birds were perched on them. When he was silent they spoke and never argued in his presence. If anybody spoke in his gathering they would all listen until that person finished his words and then they would begin the speech of what they were talking about.

- He would laugh at what they laughed at, he would wonder at what they wondered at or marveled.
- If somebody who did not know his gathering was harsh, then he was patient with them.
- If he saw anybody he would tell his companions “help them out” if that person was in need.
- He never sought any praise.

- He never cut anybody off when they were speaking until they were finished or the gathering had ended. That is what Sufyan ibn Wakee related on this.

The last reason which is the highest reason for muhabbah is because he is the habib of Allah. Allah put his love in the hearts of the people that have been graced with that love and mercy. Allah increase our love of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam).

CD 2

Allah says in the Quran “we have not sent any messenger except that he is obeyed by the permission of God or by the authority of Allah”. The purpose of the messengers is that they are obeyed, but because of the nature of the human condition, human beings always fall short of being in a state of obedience and the idea of obeying is that we recognise authority. Human beings in the presence of authority tend to be very well behaved for instance when people speed in cars when they see police they often slow down. We basically view it as hypocritical for a person to do something that he knows is wrong but when he is in the presence of one who can redress that wrong he stops doing it. It is very interesting what authorises somebody to have authority over other people. We have governments instituted because human beings recognize we need to live in society and if we do not have governments we would tend to treat each other poorly because many human beings are aggressive by nature. Many human beings when they want something they will do what they perceive they need to do to achieve that thing so human beings have instituted governments.

One of the things that we do not think about very often is that government is actually a mercy from Allah. Allah in the Quran says “had Allah not used some of you to constrain others there would be corruption everywhere”. Earlier commentators tended to interpret it as “had it not been muslims stopping non muslims then the world would be corrupt”. Fakhrudin ad Raazi the famous musfair was a very deep and insightful human being and he took it to another level in his famous tafseer. One of the meanings of this verse is the blessing of government irrespective of who is in charge. One of the examples of this is in Iraq, there were many images of Iraqis angry at the Americans because they had not established order. Once they came they took out the government. Suddenly there was anarchy and people houses were being looted. The poor people do not get looted, they usually do the looting and largely they feel they are getting back at the rich people who have been looting them under the semblance of order for a long time. This is what you have in unjust societies. You have rich people loot the poor people and then the order is there to make sure the poor people do not get what they have lost. But this is what the people wanted, they wanted order, to establish order. They did not want anarchy because anarchy is a tragedy so we do not reflect on the blessing of social order and the loss of social order and what that means.

One of the gifts that Allah has given are Prophets and they are sent to be obeyed because their obedience is in fact the obedience of Allah, they are not God but obeying them is the same as obeying God. Allah has given them authority in His name. This is why the law is of the essence of humans interaction with other humans and at the essence of the Islamic understanding of the relationship with our Lord. Our Lord has given us prayer not like some traditions when you can pray anytime. We have specific times we have to pray. They have been legislated. They are in

the books of legal sacred law. So we are told to pray at Fajr, you cannot pray at 10am because you like to sleep late. You have to make an effort. Now why do you obey that law? Because you believe it is from God and God has ultimate authority. The more you become aware of Allah in the same way that a policeman is in your presence you tend to follow the law. There are different levels of that. Some people might only speed, run a stop light when nobody is around. They might do insignificant things. There are other times when they see something that is not their property, they want it and they take it. Why, because there is no internal mechanism to stop them. This is what we call your conscious. This is something that is developed. It is developed largely when we are young. We are told things by our parents. We recognise right and wrong and we enter into this conscious.

When Allah sent these messengers, he sent them to be obeyed by the authority of Allah. We do not obey them by their own authority. We obey them by what they represent. This is why the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said “the political authority is the shade of God on earth”. What do you do in the shade? You seek protection from the heat of the sun so that you do not die. Shade is a blessing so political order is a blessing. Also the order of your house, the sultan of parents over the children. If the children rebelled against the parents then what order do you have in the house? If the children just did what they wanted, if they refused to go to school and learn then how do we teach the next generation the necessary knowledges that have been acquired over centuries and it is transmitted from one generation to the next generation and the understanding that when you go to a school and that teacher has something that you do not have, you recognise his authority. When your parents tell you something, you recognise their authority. Why? Because they know things that you do not know. They have been on earth longer than you have and they are not always right. The nature of human authority is that it is fallible.

But the nature of divine authority is that it is infallible but even with divine authority how do we understand it? Then we have problems because this is when the human understanding comes into revelation and this is what we called ijtiḥad and human beings can make mistakes in their ijtiḥad and human beings can do absurd things in the name of religion in the same way that laws can be passed in a secular society that are absolutely ridiculous that systems can come into existence and people wonder why they are there. It sometimes takes a great deal of time to get rid of them so when the messengers come, they come with this authority and those who submit to that authority submit for two reasons because they genuinely believe it or it is simply what they were told. They inherited it, they do not know why or the real reasons other than this is what I was told. That type of person will not be adhering in the same way as the one who actually believes it. “Are they the same those who know and those who don’t know?”.

Now the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said “I was only sent to teach”. My only purpose amongst you is to teach you. In another ḥadith, he said “I was sent only to perfect noble

character”. It does not negate the first because noble character is what he is teaching. How do we become human beings? We are not animals. The word in Arabic for human being is “the rational animal”. There is no other animal on earth that shares that quality, that we are thinking creatures, we are homo sapiens. Even in the West, the classification in biological classification is the sapiential animal. The knowing creature, the one who knows. Allah has told us in the Quran that there are two types of knowledge. They know about the outward of the world but they do not know about the other world – the akhirah. This is the first world. There is a last world. Allah has told us there are two types of knowledges. Knowledges of this world and knowledges of the other world. You can become completely ignorant of one or the other or both. The jahil is the person who does not have knowledge or the jahil is also someone who does not act according to his knowledge. That is also jahil. Jahil is also the person who thinks he knows something but understands it incorrectly. That is another jahil. Jahil or ignorance in Islam is not just one kind of ignorance. There are different types of ignorance. You can know how to build a bridge or fly an aeroplane but you might not know how to go the bathroom, how to clean yourself from impurities. You might know that pi relates to a circle but you might not know that you were created for worship so you can understand something about irrational numbers and not understand something that is beyond number. The infinite. One in Arabic is not a number. Allah is not a number. One is not a number in Arabic. Numbers begin at 2 in the Arabic language.

If we look at our situation as muslims we are people that Allah said “we only sent messengers except to be obeyed”. So how do we relate that then if they were only sent to be obeyed, how do relate that state of disobedience to our Lord and how we rectify that with out Lord? The verse goes on “had it not been that they transgressed and oppressed themselves, they come to you O messenger of Allah and asked forgiveness of Allah and the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) asked forgiveness for them. They would have found Allah full of mercy”.

Our inability to obey authority is part of the human condition and Allah has said that in order to redress this flaw that has not only been purposefully put into you because the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said ”had you not disobeyed would have feared something worse than disobedience which is vanity or ujb that you start thinking yourselves to be wonderful”. Whose crime is that? It is the crime of Iblees. It is why he was not made the khilafah in the earth according to our tradition. Iblees worshipped Allah. There is a tradition that said there was no place on earth where he did not make sajdah but every sajdah he did increased him in his sense of superiority. Instead of engendering humility in his soul, it actually resulted in pride so when he was asked to bow down to Adam, he refused. Allah asked “what has stopped you from prostrating to Adam?” He had arrogance and refused because of arrogance. Allah asked him not that He needed to know but in order to reveal something to Iblees for himself. He did not say “I did not prostrate because I am arrogant”. He said “I am better than him, I am created from fire and air and he is created from water and earth”. My elements are fire and air and are gaseous in

other words they move up by their nature, earth and water move down so he looked at it from the eye of the outward and the material world. He said mine are more subtle, ethereal, they are not low elements, they are high elements. He believed that made him superior and that in a sense is the first act of racism because if you ask someone why are you better than an Iraqi or Pakistani? People say because I am white, anglo saxon, this or that. I am better because I am Punjabi and he is Beloushi. I am a Qurayshi and he is Tamimi. These are sicknesses in the heart and this is the disease of Iblees. To see yourself better than others and this is why the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said “I was commanded to humble myself until no one showed arrogance towards another person because if anyone had a right to feel superior than anyone else it would be me because I was chosen by Allah, but I refused to do that. I am the master of the children of Adam and I have no pride in declaring that to you”.

Not only because he was showing his humility and giving us a legal ruling that we need to know as muslims. This is a legal ruling. Who is the greatest of creation is a legal ruling to understand a hierarchy. He was also letting us know that is pride is not in mastery over the children of Adam but in his uboodiyah to Allah. He is the real life servant of Allah. “Glory be to the One who has taken His servant on this night journey”. Why did Allah say servant? It was because this was not in his relationship between creation, it was in his relationship between the Creator and himself. His relationship between himself and Allah is a relationship of uboodiyah. His relationship between the creation of Allah is his relationship as a messenger. He is Rasulullah as an intermediary between Allah and creation but he is Abdullah as an intermediary between Allah and His creation.

In other words he is calling creation to Allah but he is also calling Allah to creation. He is calling creation to Allah but he is also calling Allah to creation. “O Allah forgive my people, they do not know what they are doing”. On the day of qiyamah, he will call Allah to his creation. His function is abd and Rasul. This is his authority that Allah has given him. He says to him “intercede and it will be granted to you”. Allah could have forgiven His creation without intercession but He is teaching us something about the nature of this world. There is nothing that does not exist without causation. There is nothing that does not exist without intermediaries. You cannot exist without the hydrogen bond holding all of your DNA together. You cannot breathe without the means of lungs and oxygen, nitrogen and gaseous exchanges. Your heart cannot beat. Blood cannot circulate. Everything is by intermediaries, because only Allah is free. If Allah wants a thing, there is no intermediary. This is the uncreated word of God, it is not even with letters. It is the iradah of Allah, the qalam of Allah and the knowledge of Allah that all exists as one reality with Allah. We speak of them as separate things but in reality they are one thing. This messenger that was sent to be obeyed that the more you become aware of him the more you become aware of your obligation to obey him. The more distant you are from him, the less present he is in your life, and the less credence you give to his creed.

If you never saw the police, you would start driving in a certain way. You would stop obeying the laws, you would not have that sense of authority present. If you lose a sense of divine authority in your life, you also begin to lose a sense of your need to obey that authority and that is why the messenger of Allah is central to our teaching. You cannot exalt the Creator without exalting His message and you cannot exalt His message without exalting his Messenger. He was sent that you exalt him, that you honour him. Those who exalt the symbols of God, they are doing it because of something in their hearts and when you magnify the Creator, you are magnifying what Allah has commanded you to magnify and that is why we celebrate him. We do not declare his divinity. "Leave what Christians have said about their Prophet". He is our Prophet also but Imam al Busri has said leave aside what they ascribe to him which means divinity. He was a man, a human being. That is the Aryan position which was large group of Christians in the early period. They believed he was a human being. The divination was declared orthodoxy in 325 after the birth of Isa. This was a debate amongst the Christians for 325 years whether he was divine or not. We could have made the same mistake. There are some muslims who made that mistake about Ali. They never made it about the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam). Nobody has ever declared our Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) divine and that is one of the miracles of our Prophet that there are people who declared Ali divine and that they did not declare the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) divine. That is a miracle and if you cannot see that you are a fool. Allah has protected his Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) from being associated with Allah. The proof is that they associated Ali with Allah and where is Ali in relation to the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) with all his greatness and stature? He is a drop in the ocean and yet there are people who claim divinity for him. But we did not make that mistake with our Prophet, why? It is because he did not test our intellects with more than we can understand our of a covetous desire for our guidance so we neither wander or go astray. This is why he said "do not claim for me what the Christians have claimed for Isa, but say the servant of Allah and the messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam). I am a man like you but I am not like you" because we do not receive wahy. He is not the same yet he is the same. One of the scholars said "the Prophet is a human but not like other humans like a ruby is a mineral but not like the other stones".

This is the gift we have been given. We have been given the gift of understanding the messenger in relation to the One who sent him which is one of the calamities of religion when the Messenger becomes exalted over the One sending. This is the failure of the Buddhists, Hindus and ultimately the failure of the Christians in our understanding. So what we are doing when we reflect on these meanings and I would say that I believe the mawlid that if you celebrate it one day out of the year it is a bidah. I would say you should not do that. The mawlid should be celebrated every single day of your life until you die because if you are not happy that he was born you are a kafir. We celebrate his birth everyday of our lives and we know that his own Uncle was given respite in the hellfire, Abu Lahab because he celebrated his birthday according

to the sahih hadith. He freed a slave girl that came and gave him the news of the birth of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam). In the sahih hadith, he is given water in the hellfire because of that one act. So what do you say about a man who celebrates his birthday everyday of his life? What is his reward? We are here to celebrate but not today, tomorrow, the next day and the day after until the last breath you take. We say that hope springs eternal. The nature of spring is that it gives you hope. He was born in Spring in April the most temperate month of the year, the month we all yearn for, we look forward to the flowers. If you look around you, you see a lot of green. What does that green do to us? It delights the eye because it connects us with a very deep truth. Green in the spectrum of colours that is between purple and red. It is exactly in the middle. If you look at the light spectrum of the 6 or 7 according to Newton, there are 7 colours in the light spectrum. If you look at them and add them altogether and divide by 2, you get the spectrum of green because it is the middle colour. It is the colour that the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) loved the most. He was born on Monday because according to the ulema it was on the day that Allah created vegetation.

There is something else about green, his dome was painted green out of a wisdom by the people at that time because they were the people of the internal and they painted the dome green because it represents something. The secret of life in biology is photosynthesis. What is photosynthesis? It is two greek words. It means to make light. What is being made is chlorophyll and what is chlorophyll? It is green. So the secret of life is the ability to produce green. That is what life is, the ability to produce green. Why did Allah make the secret of life related to the colour green? This is a modern discovery, This is not something they knew 1400 years ago. Everything that you see in the outward world is a meaning set up in an image. Those who discern this are from the people of intelligence. This whole world is meanings set up in images. So whenever you see some outward thing you should know that it indicates something else. The Arabic word for world alam is the means by which you came to the knowledge ilm. What did we come to know? Our Lord and that is the secret of the whole universe. Like the poet said “isn’t it in every sign, in everything it is a sign indicating the truth of the Oneness of Allah of the shahada”. The whole world is testifying and witnessing the truth. So what is it when light hits vegetation there is an extraordinary event that occurs in which it causes a process to happen and in that process photosynthesis occurs which is the production of chlorophyll. What happens is that is what gives us our nourishment. Even protein that we from the animals is still from chlorophyll. Even the meat that you eat is as a result of this secret. Your whole body is as a result from this secret. Every cell in your body cannot exist without this reality. The same is true for the soul. There is something, when light is allowed into the soul it produces something and this is the light of the messenger of Allah. “Light has come to you”. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) had a light and anyone who denies that light is a kafir. The sahaba said “we saw in his face that light and that light is his secret”. This light that Allah has placed in his Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) and Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) in turn gave that

light out, that light is what transforms the earth and brings it to life. That light that the messenger of Allah grants you. He grants it because he is the giver. "Allah is the giver but I am the one who disperses what He gives. I am the one who has been given that authority to disperse this". This is why he is central to our teachings and that centrality goes on as long as we go on. People misunderstand this but they are foolish because these are at the essence of what we have been given. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam), this light that enters into the heart by praying on the Prophet. Allah says "the Prophet is an object of His action and his action is of the essence". The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) is an object of that and it is a special object in the same that we are also an object of that. We are an object of that because Allah says Allah prays on us but how does He pray on us? The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said "no one says a prayer on me except Allah says a prayer on him ten times".

So we do not associate our Lord with our Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam). We do not do that. We do not believe he is divine, we do not believe he is uncreated. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) is a creation of Allah. He came into existence from nothing. So we do not attribute to him divinity and we negate that. We recognise the centrality of his authority and his opposition. It is by the permission of Allah. If you love Allah, follow me. We cannot love Allah according to our understanding without following a Prophet of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam). The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) of our age is our Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) and we accept all of the Prophets before him and we love them all. We love Jesus, Moses, John, Ilyas all of these Prophets. These are our Prophets and we love them but we love our Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) as our Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) who specifically was sent to us. He is the beloved of Allah.

I want to finish this by saying a few things:

Good intentions without guidance is of no benefit. You have to have guidance. When I was taught, I was taught there is no reward for action without knowledge. There is no benefit in it. Some say it harms and certainly causes harm because as you lose the love of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) you lose the light of traditional Islam. You lose the light of this deen. "I was sent only as mercy to this world". How do I attribute that to my Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) if I think I can go kill a Jew because he is a Jew. If I think I can blow up a synagogue in Morocco and the Moroccan Jews are the last Jews left actually like the muslims and have a high regard for the muslims because they are the last Jews that still now their existence is owed to Islam because they fled from the persecution of Spain, from the Christians to the Muslims and that is why they are there. There are there because our Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said he was the protector of the dhimmiyeen. He said "whoever betrays the trust of a dhimmi, I am the advocate of that Jew, Christian, Magian, Buddhist on the day of judgment". He is not going to stand by the muslim. He is going to stand

by the Jew of Christian and you should think about that because it is a sound tradition. Our religion is not about tribalism, that is other traditions. Our religion is not about I am in the right tribe no it is I am on the right side. If you are on wrong side in any situation, then you should know that your Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) is not standing by you unless you repent. That is what has happened, these people have lost sight of our Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam). What right do you have to remove somebody's life from this world without just cause? If you say "this is what they do to us", they are not our teachers. Since when did they become our teachers? If we do not stop this madness we are going to end up like the Jews. We will end up in the oven because they will just get fed up of us. Seriously, and do not think that is not possible. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said "you are going to follow the Jews". If you look at their persecution and what was done to them, do not be surprised if that happens to us. But we should be speaking out about this now, this is not our religion. We should not allow people to speak on our behalf, either with their words or by their actions. We need to condemn these things because they are wrong. I am saying this because this is my understanding of Islam and I do not find any other understanding. I have read their arguments and do not buy them.

Show people the true face of Islam. The mercy, generosity, faithfulness of Islam, the honesty of the tradition, the uprightness that it inculcates in the hearts of the followers and adherence. This is what you have to do, if you do not do it, I am telling you, things are getting bad and they are going to continue to get bad. They have just passed the Abu Hamza law in England which means they can redeem citizenship from people they deem undesirables. That is named after a muslim who has become so heinous in their sight and obnoxious that they have passed a law to rescind citizenship from people like that. We have to think deeply and seriously. I am saying this as naseeha with serious counsel and advice to myself and you. We have to think deeply and be able to dialogue.

I went into a mosque the other day and I was almost attacked physically. I was thinking why aren't we human anymore? Why can't we sit down? Why have we descended to the level of dogs and vicious animals? Raising our voices and shouting at each other. We can't have a civil conversation. Our Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said that a mumin does not raise his voice over another mumin but he listens until he finishes what he has to say. That is how he describe the character of a believer. They walk gently on the earth and when ignorant people speak to them, they say peace. That is the description. I don't find any descriptions in the Quran that say be fierce with the kuffar. There is a verse that says "Allah does not prohibit you from being nice to people who do not abuse you, persecute you for your religion or steal you land from showing them birr, sharing your wealth with them". Allah loves people who do that. He says He loves those people who show non muslims kindness because they in turn have been kind to them. When the Christians of Najran came to the Prophet, they came with humility. He let them pray in his mosque according to one riwayat. These are the teachings we have forgotten.

Why have we forgotten them? It is because we have forgotten Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam). We forgot he came as a mercy to everyone. The muslim is the one who muslims are safe from his evil. So if you want to be a muslim then you have to elevate your level of consciousness through a higher level. That is why people become muslim. Now people think Islam is a hotel they have reserved for themselves and there is no more room. They put up a sign saying sorry no vacancies. If you come they slam the door in your face because they think it is booked until yaum ul qiyamah so they don't even have to be nice thinking they might come back later when we do have a vacancy. We have muslims out there, this is their attitude "kuffar". Who gave you that authority to send people to hell? I thank God these people aren't my judge on yaum ul qiyamah. That is why Allah said if He put rahmah in your hands you would have been misers. You would not have shared it, but our Lord is not like that and nor is our Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam).

- See more at: [http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/Description-of-the-Prophet\(SAW\)#sthash.Kf5Amoto.dpuf](http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/Description-of-the-Prophet(SAW)#sthash.Kf5Amoto.dpuf)

Transcript for Dawah: How to Speak to People of Other Faiths

Transcript Details

Event Name: Dawah: How to Speak to People of Other Faiths

Transcript Author: Unknown

Description: I'm not sure where this was found

Date Transcribed: 1/1/2000 12:00:00 AM

Original URL:

This is an invaluable talk for anyone interested in effectively communicating the teachings of Islam to people of other faiths. Hamza Yusuf describes the gentle style of the Prophet, peace be upon him, when speaking to people about Islam and his emphasis on talking to people at a level they can comprehend according to their own state. Hamza Yusuf reminds us to look at people of other faiths with the eye of mercy, to be tolerant and respectful of people's views, and to remember that being a good example to others speaks more than a thousand words. An excellent speech for Muslims who want to share the beauty of Islam with other people of other beliefs.

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

That was an interesting inroad what was just said to what I wanted to talk about, talking to people. That introduction was actually for non muslims, not for muslims. The reason for that is non muslims have a different criteria that muslims have for instance if I was talking to a non muslim a person is given credibility based on his prominence in a society often for muslims a person loses credibility based on his prominence in a society so these are very different ways of looking at a person. If somebody in the West met with a leader of a state that would be seen often as a sign of credibility. In the muslim world, it is often seen as a loss of credibility. That is very important in understanding the psychology of the people you are dealing with. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said "the best of kings are those who are at the doors of the scholars and the worst of scholars are those who are at the doors of kings" so it is actually the

Islamic tradition that it is seen as a negative and not a plus. That again relates to criteria and how we assess things. That was an interesting sidenote but what I wanted to talk about today was looking at two aspects of dawah.

Dawah is misunderstood by many muslims to include muslims. The idea that we make dawah to muslims. There is no such things as dawah to muslims if we use dawah in the technical term that scholars use it in terms of calling people to Islam because muslims are already muslim so they do not need to be invited to Islam. The term that is used for dealing with muslims who are wereward and need to be reminded and that includes the majority of us is called “commanding to good and forbidding evil” or forbidding what is wrong. So that is what a muslim does with another muslim. That has conditions and that is what Shaykh Yusuf was talking about. This idea of knowledge before you actually engage in dawah or in enjoining good and forbidding evil in calling people to Islam and in commanding to what is right and forbidding evil. There are many people who do not know what is right or wrong. An added nuance to that is what is called in Western civilisation “situational ethics” because there are things that are wrong in certain situations, they are not wrong in other situations. So we are not Kantian, if people have studied Western philosophy, they know something about the categorical imperative which is an ethical theory in Western society.

To tell a lie is always wrong and in any situation. That is not true in Islam. There are actually times when it is not only permissible to prevaricate it is actually considered an obligation. That would be if a tyrant is trying to unjustly kill or persecute somebody, it is actually permitted for you to divert that tyrant away from that innocent person through a lie and there are many examples of that, it can be looked at in the books of fiqh. But generally lying is a heinous wrong in Islam. One of the things about lying is that it relates very much to dawah. The muslims in many ways, before I get into that, what I want to talk about is two aspects of dawah because I would say in many ways dawah does apply to muslims today and the reason I would say that is that there are many muslims that have deviated so far from Islam that even at the basic rudimentary beliefs of Islam that make you a muslim have been lost on many muslims so that in a more traditional period of time many muslims would actually be considered non muslims because of the erroneous beliefs that they hold. Now time is always taken into consideration and that is something very important in Shariah.

The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) during his early period, the way that he treated people was very different to his later period not because he changed but because the level of

consciousness of the people had changed. For instance there are many hadith in which the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) excused the most gross breaches of courtesy. During the time of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) there was somebody who yanked his coat. He was a bedouin man, he literally yanked his coat. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) was light skinned and because of that a red mark appeared on his neck and the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) dealt with this man in a very beautiful way partly because he understood that he was a bedouin and the bedouin are very rough in their behaviour. Also partly because the man was ignorant and when people are ignorant, there is a different level of understanding.

During the time of Imam Malik, somebody once had a very gross breach of adab or courtesy in his gathering and Imam Malik said something to him indicating that and the man came back with an even grosser breach of courtesy. At that point of a group of Malik's teachers grabbed this man's turban. They used to wear a tahneek, they wore a turban and under the neck it had two tails. They grabbed this man's turban and dragged him out of the majlis or the gathering of Imam Malik. Now obviously in this age that would be unacceptable but in the time of Malik the level of knowledge in Madinah was so high. In this gathering if somebody started screaming or shouting and became violent you would want people to come in and control that person, remove them from the auditorium. That is because that is our level of tolerance. As a society becomes more rarified, the levels of tolerance in terms of breaches of courtesy become lowered which is a sign actually of high civilisation when breaches of courtesy are rejected. That is why if you look at traditional Japanese culture, very slight breaches of courtesy would have been so gross and unacceptable that people would actually have to leave the town or village that it occurred in. This is also occurred in the Arabian peninsula. There is a famous story about a man who once had such a gross breach of adab that he left the town he was in and he missed the town after 30 years of being away. He decided to come back and met a young man at the town. The young man asked the man where he was from. He said "I am from here but I moved away 30 years ago". The young man said "were you here at that time when so and so did such and such?" and it was his breach.

In those type of cultures, things like that were the earmarks of the year. Muslims today now have distanced themselves so far from some basic teachings that to apply the same hadith that we find in the sunnah of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) that relate to a later time now would be a gross injustice. This is something that takes knowledge and discernment of understanding the situation, the level of the person you are talking to of who is in front of you. There are many people who have tape recorders and have pre-recorded messages that they are going to deliver. It does not matter who you are, it does not matter what your level of education is, this person who

is a dai'ee will come, will click and turn on a cassette that is in his brain and the same thing will come out. Then he wonders why he keeps getting the same responses from people because when you are dealing with a human being you are dealing with a very complicated creature.

Each human being is bringing with him or her an entire history. They are bringing with them their childhood. They are bringing with them their relationships with their parents which is the first authoritarian experience and some people have very traumatic experiences with their parents which leads to a certain type of response to any type of authority that they see in the world. There are other people who have very dysfunctional family situations with their siblings, uncles, aunts, there are people who are victims of incest. There are people who are victims of child abuse. There are people that constantly witnessed their parents fighting. There are people that were abandoned by their father. There are children with no legitimacy, they do not even know who their father is which is another type of trauma. There are people that are raised orphans so each one of these human beings that you see out there has an entire biography and if you do not take that into consideration when looking at a person, that is a unique human being that has a unique experience of the world. As human beings we have a common experience in the world in terms of being human of being conscious. We have very particular experiences that give each one of us a nuanced perspective on the world. There are some people that the world has been a wonderful place since they got into it.

There was a cartoon that had three fish, one was a little fish about to be swallowed by a middle fish and then there was a giant fish about to swallow the middle fish. The little fish says "life is terrible" the middle fish says "it is not so bad" and the big fish says "life is great". So people have very different experiences. If you take for instance this culture, minorities that grow up in certain areas they have a completely different experience of America. If you grow up for instance in Harlem or East Auckland you will have a very different experience of America than if you grow up in Los Gattos or in Auckland Hills. If you went to a public school, you will have a different experience of America than if you went to a private school. If you went to a state university you will have a different experience of America than if you went to Yale or Harvard. So we are dealing with many different experiences of the world when we look at people. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) when he looked at people he saw who he was looking at. Musab ibn Umayr who actually was sent to Madinah for the coming of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) learned about everybody in that city. When the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) came, he sat next to him and when people would come into his majlis, he sat next to him and would whisper into his ear "this is so and so, he has this position". He would inform the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) of who this man was because the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi

wa sallam) did not talk to the sayyid of a people, the noble man of a people in the same way he would talk to another person. This is not because he treated people differently but he said “I was commanded to observe the protocols of people”. And every people have a protocol. So when you go into, for instance a judge, contempt of court, being held in contempt is not the same as if you are in a gathering of a group of people and you start raising your voice because you want to make a point. In a court, you cannot raise your voice like that because the judge will not tolerate it, why? He will not tolerate it because he represents something and if you do not respect what he represents he will fine you, hold you in contempt of court, he will have you arrested if he has to. Every society has these protocols and if they are not understood and observed then you are doing a misjustice to the people you are dealing with. Some of them are fine, Islam accepts them and other ones that if people became muslim they would throw them out of the window because not everything is appropriate and those things that become part of a culture are understood by those people to have a certain input and if they are not honoured by other people they see it as a disrespect. That is why a stranger is often excused for certain things.

When I was in West Africa one of the things that I did not know is that if you are married to somebody’s daughter you never eat or drink in the presence of their parents which is actually a pre-Islamic tradition but the Arabs of Africa still have that tradition. I was on a journey once with a man and we were going to the house of his father in law. He said to me “I am really thirsty” and I agreed. When we got to the house, his father in law was there. Then they brought some milk. I handed it to him and he said “I don’t want any”. I said “you just told me that you were thirsty”. He said no, no I am not thirsty”. I said “Bismillah, just drink”. He said no. Then I heard the women in the back giggling. I didn’t know what was going on. I drank the milk and he explained to me later. So that was a breach of adab or courtesy in that culture that I was not taken to account for but had he taken that, it would have been considered rude and disrespectful. There are immigrants that come to this country that think that the Americans have no traditions, that they have no culture or civilisation and they are wrong. There are many levels of society in America and you might have been introduced to one, two or three but this culture has many levels. You can get into those most rarified circles and there is a completely different set of protocols than you will find in say popular culture which can obviously be very crude and popular culture in most civilisations has been rude. It is a testimony to faith based cultures that often the popular culture has not been a crude culture. It is an indication that real values and virtues have permeated the societies so the people are living at a certain level.

When we look at individuals we have to look at all those backgrounds. I have been in Saudi Arabia in houses where the brother of someone who is married to a woman has never seen his

brothers wife face because it would be considered a breach of courtesy and that is in the eastern province and I have been in those houses and never seen any of the women. I have been in Hijaz in houses where the women are dressed like American women and they view no shame and there is nothing wrong in sitting as far as they are concerned and if you told them something was wrong they would be surprised because they were not even raised like that. I was once having dinner and there was some Saudi people there and I said “you know in Saudi I have always eaten on the floor” and this person said to me “do people eat on the floor in Saudi?”. And she grew up her entire life in Saudi and she was not joking. She had been in a certain society that simple that was what the bedouin did. I said “no city people”. She said “city people that eat on the floor?”. There are people in this country that you will find they will be shocked to find out certain types of behaviour in certain areas. So this is something very interesting about all these multiple levels of existence that are happening on the same planet at the same time. Therefore in speaking to people you have to recognise, you have to determine what type of background. Educational background. You have to determine ethnic background. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) was concerned about tribes, about knowing which tribe the person came from. If he was a Qalbi or Harbi, it was different in Arabia than being from the Hawazam or from the Qurayshi or Banu Tamim. That is true in every culture. You will always have those demarcations, it is part of human nature.

So in looking at how we are dealing with dawah in terms of muslims and inviting muslims back to Islam we have to understand there are many people who have been so distanced from Islam that you cannot expect them for instance if you meet a woman now in America who grew up, she might be Palestinian or Afghani or an Egyptian or Pakistani woman but she has grown up in a very secular home but she knows she is muslim and if you treat her as if “why aren’t you wearing a hijab? Why don’t you cover your hair? Don’t you know that is haram?”. There was a muslim man who came to the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) of Allah who gave him as a gift a bottle of wine. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said “didn’t you know that Allah prohibited wine?”. He said “I did not know that”. Then he whispered to the man who came with him a servant and then the man said “What did you just tell him?”. He said “I told him to go sell it”. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said “the one that prohibited its drinking also prohibited its selling. He said “In that case go dump it out”. Now the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) did not say to him “what is wrong with you, how dare you bring a bottle of wine as a gift”. There are muslims who would say “A’udoo billah, go to hell or something”. And slam the door on them. That is not what the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) did. That is not how he treated the person because he was looking at the level of a persons knowledge and consciousness.

People are on an evolutionary journey. We believe in evolution in a different way. People in this culture associate evolution with moving from lower order creatures to higher order creatures. But evolution of the soul is something very real. There are people at different levels. There are Arabs that say “the good actions of the righteous are the bad actions of the people in the divine presence” because the evolution is different. So somebody might be a very good muslim but he does not even know that his actual state, there are many muslims, that outwardly everything is fine but there is an inward fiqh and an outward fiqh. There are inward rules for the prayer. You could do a perfect prayer outwardly so your fiqh of the Dhuhur is perfect but your inward fiqh, the khushoo in the prayer, the sakinah in the prayer, the hudoor in the prayer, the presence of mind in prayer, you could be thinking about whether the Giants won the game yesterday. There are muslims in the Bay area that are concerned about that right now. But that might be where the heart is and where your heart is that is where you are. So your body might be in prayer but your heart is in sin. That is Bani Adam.

So you have to look at the level of the persons spiritual evolution in speaking to them and understanding. I have heard people years ago that got into these big arguments with me and then years later they met me and apologised. In fact that just happened to me recently from somebody who just came up to me and apologised. I said “don’t worry about it”. But where that person was, he could not see something that he was not able to see later about something he thought was wrong but later on he realised it was not wrong based on his knowledge and understanding at that age. That is something we all go through. There are things that we think are absolutely wrong and later on we learn they are right or they were at least possible, that there was room for interpretation but people that are hasty to judge, that is a sign of spiritual immaturity. Imam at Mazhari, it was said about him that his knowledge was so vast that he rarely saw anybody do something wrong because he would always find that is so and so’s opinion or maybe he is following so and so’s fatwa. So traditionally the ulema considered it a sign of immaturity for people that were so hasty to condemn other people. It was actually a sign of immaturity. One of the tragedies of the modern muslim condition is that because of mass education which is largely secular, people have been introduced into literacy and that enables them to read books that in previous periods of time they would not have been able to read.

One of the things about reading books without suhbah is that you take rules without realities. You will take the outward but not the inward with it and one of the signs traditionally of an auto didact in the muslim world is that they had a habitual condemnation of others. Ibn Hazam, he was a great scholar and I love his books but he was known for being really fierce with some of the other scholars, attacking them. He was also known for being didact. He was somebody that

did not study with a shaykh. He had a brilliant intellect and he studied on his own. There are many scholars in the history of Islam that were like that. They were brilliant and the ulema actually debate whether you can acquire knowledge without a teacher or not and most of the ulema believe you can if you have enough brilliance or intelligence, natural gifts that you but you will always be deficient in tarbiyah that the person will not have those qualities that are associated with taking knowledge from people who have taken knowledge from people who have taken knowledge back to the Messenger of Allah because there is a tahdeeb, polishing of the soul, that goes with the knowledge because as that scholar you are studying with, he is breaking away ignorance because knowledge is already in the soul and what he is doing is sculpting what is already in the soul. You cannot acquire anything that was not already in you. That is what knowledge is. Education in latin means to bring out of. It means to lead out of. Alama means that Allah has already imprinted in the human being knowledge and that is why the Quran is called dhikr. It is the remembrance because what you are doing is you are remembering what was already put in you. If your heart is so encrusted, there is blockage and you are unable to recollect. It is like a person who lived through an event but he cannot remember. What will often prevent you from remembering things is trauma, trauma of the world. There are people who are unable to study or learn.

In terms of dealing with muslims, the basic premise has to be compassion. We have to have compassion for our brothers and sisters. We have to recognize that all these ayahs and hadith that are brought such as frowning in the face of an innovator, those hadith were all related when the ummah was filled with knowledge and they applied to times when people's deviancy is clearly unacceptable. When you have times where nobody knows anymore what the truth is, I mean, our books are now being manipulated. Last night I was showing people that I have in my library the same book that was printed in 1970 and it has things in it that were taken out in later editions. The publishing house was purchased by a certain sect that did not want those ideas being disseminated in the ummah so people do not even realise that their books are being manipulated. The tradition of Islam is being changed in computers and things are being blocked out or deleted, just retype set. You read a book and you think you are reading what the author said and people have removed from it. That is one of the things that Allah says "those who change or alter words from their appropriate places". So people do not even realise that the deen is being changed before their very eyes although the deen is protected and we believe that but that does not mean you cannot have a type of treachery. Historically it has occurred also, in the time of Imam Sharhari who said people put things in their books. There are people on the internet who write things about people that have never happened and then it becomes a lie. One of the hadiths in the sahih, the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said "there is coming a time when somebody will tell a lie and it instantaneously it will reach the corners of the earth". The hadith says a man will

speak a lie and he did not say thumma, he said fa, it will immediately thereafter be all over the world.

One of the things about liars in Shariah, you are a liar if you tell something that you have not confirmed its veracity. A lot of muslims do not know that because they have not studied the rules of the tongue. Kadhab in the Arabic language is somebody that continually tells lies. It is different from Kadhur. In the hadith literature, a person would be declared a liar if he did not verify the sanad. There are people who read the books of hadith now and it says the narrator was a liar and they do not understand that the ulema meant he was not someone who fabricated hadiths, he was somebody that did not verify the truthfulness of the hadith and would relate it as if it were true which is a liar in Shariah. So if somebody tells you something about somebody and you go and tell somebody else and it is not true then you are written as a liar and if you keep doing that you become a liar with God because you can tell a lie in your life but if you do it consistently you become a liar with Allah and a liar is the worst of creatures and the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said “it is enough to consider a man evil that he relates everything he hears”. The Quran says if a fasiq comes to you with some news you should immediately find out whether that is true or not and in a riwayat it says to find out what is being said and to understand it and to find out whether it is really from that person. There are things that you hear and you do not know what they meant by it. So and so said such and such. You do not even know, you have to ask the person what they mean. A qadi does that, even in the rules of apostasy, the qadi has to ask the person, “what did you mean?” because he might have meant something completely different.

There is a hadith that says “if a person drinks wine, he is flogged, if he does it again he is flogged, if he does it again he is flogged, the fourth time it says kill him”. Even though it is a sahih hadith, none of the fuqaha accepted the hadith as a ruling. They leave it on the books because it has a sound sanad but it is not the fiqh of this ummah, it is not the jurisprudence of the Shariah. There are other many hadiths like that. There is a sahih hadith that says “may Allah cure the thief that steals an egg and loses his hand”. So someone who has his Muhsin Khan Bukhari and reads it, so if you steal an egg and you get your hand cut off, none of the fuqaha took that hadith. That is why ibn Abdul Barr in the 6th century was complaining in his age, a man who memorized 100,000 hadiths by heart and is called Hafidh al Maghrib with all the isnae and has a 30 volume book on Maliki fiqh and another 20 volume book on the Muwatta. He said “what a terrible time I am living in, these people memorise the hadith and they do not study fiqh” so he was already complaining about people who were reading books of hadith thinking they knew what they meant.

I mean there are people who think ahle dimmah are just the Jews and Christian and they go round telling people if you are not Jew or Christian you cannot live under Islam. That is not true, that is one opinion. That is not a universal opinion. It was not the practiced opinion of the ruling powers of Islam. The Ottomans did not do that, the Hanafis in India did not do that and the Maliks certainly did not do that because Imam Malik accepted jizya even from the idol worshipper and that is learning fiqh. So part of the problem is that we have people running around who have not studied. The problem with literacy is that it empowers ignorant people. They say a little education is a dangerous thing. That is an American proverb. There is another American proverb “beware of the one book man” and that is about fundamentalist Christians who only learn the bible. It is the only book they will ever read and they know it inside out but it is dangerous when all you know is one book. That is all the Khawarij knew, they knew the Quran, they did not know the sunnah, the book of the fuqaha. They knew the Quran inside out and they used to quote from the Quran. The thing about the Quran is whatever you want to find, it is in there. Ali said “If I lost a camel, I would find it in the Quran”. I mean whatever you want to find is in there. Allah says He guides many by it and he leads many astray by it so don’t think that you cannot go astray with this Book. Allah is also Mudhil, people forget that name. People like the name Al Hadi. A lot of people know one name of God but do not know another name of God. That names goes with Al Hadi. People have to be very careful. The Quran can lead you astray and you are quoting it right into hell. Imam al Qaradi said if you interpret the Quran out of ignorance, he considered it kufr, just to say you think you know what the Quran meant. One of the things about modern literacy is that it enables people to read things they would never have read before. Part of the thing about studying with a scholar is that the ulema say “The food of adults is poison for little infants” and was always seen as tadurruj, that when you first begin studying with a teacher he takes you through alif, baa, thaa. You learn the alphabet and then you move on. Now we have people who have a PhD in engineering but they have not gone to kindergarten in Islam and they want to read the PhD books of Islam. If you ask them what are the huroof in tajweed, you ask them basic things about the recitation of the Quran that a 10 year old in madrassah knows they do not know yet they are reading tafseer. This is the type of situation that we find ourselves in so humility after compassion. Having a basic humility about where your level is in the big picture because if you do not know what the Shaykh said earlier, there is a book in Sahih Bukhari called learning knowledge before one speaks and there are people who say the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said “teach an ayah even if that is all you know”. I said that is not what it said, what translation did you read? It says “give news of my message even if it is one ayah”, it does not say even if that is all you know. You might quote the wrong ayah. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) when he called At-Tanuki to Islam, he just talked about paradise. He is bashir before he is nadir. He gives good news before he frightens people but he does have that message as well. Now that is dealing with muslims with muslims.

Going towards dealing with non muslims. One of the basic policies of muslim states was that they did not have conversion policies. The Ummayyads actually discouraged conversion to Islam and that is historically documented. They discouraged conversion to Islam. The way they did it was you had to join an Arabian tribe in order to become a muslim. That was stopped by Umar bin Abdul Aziz, the fifth rightly guided caliph. He ended that system. The Abasid who were much more tolerant than the Ummayyids and they dropped the total war policy because the Ummayyads had a war policy. They believed in this idea that it is historical destiny that Islam has to conquer the entire planet and they basically destroyed their empire in attempting that, it imploded. They just expanded too quickly, too far, too fast and it imploded. The Abasids recognizing the fallacy of that argument adopted a much more tolerant approach and this comes also from the Bar Meccads who were Afghans who came from an extremely tolerant background who were the dominant ministers and they had been Buddhist prior to being muslim. The Bar Meccad family was a famous priestly family in Afghanistan and they adopted a much more tolerant position of dealing with conquered people and that goes all the way until 1258. The Moghals were initially very barbaric but became quite civilized and they also had extremely tolerant policies. The Ottomans taught them all. They did not have a conversion policy. They did not in any way proselytize to non muslims. They literally let them, they had their own court systems and this came from the hadith in which the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) was asked by the Jews to judge between them. Allah says "how can they come to you and ask you to judge between them and they have the Torah and what is the rule of Allah?" so Allah in the Quran actually says that the Jews have their Torah and they should not use the Quran as their source of judgment unless they become muslims. For that reason the Ottomans had courts for the Jews in which the Rabbis did their own rulings and the Christians had their own courts. The Ottomans did not get involved unless it was penal.

In the same that in this country we have what is called people's courts. If people agree in private arbitration, they can do that and that is a good aspect of this country whereas with penal if you get outside civil code and into criminal code then the state takes it authority and it was similar in the Ottoman empire. As long as it was civil it was left to the milat to decide their own rulings and that is according to some researchers where the West actually got that because Henry Stubbs was an expert on Ottoman policies of toleration of the Ottomans, if the Europeans adopted it, it would solve the problems of religious wars. From Hobbs, you get Locke who invites the famous treaties on toleration which becomes the pillar of American freedom because America probably has the first freedom of religion act which is in the 17th Century in Maryland. It is quite radical although it is very consistent with the Ottoman tradition. Then obviously the founding fathers were very wary of having any state religion and they felt that all religions including Islam and Thomas Jefferson mentions it very clearly that muslims should have the right to worship and John Aday says not only should they have the right to worship but we should prevent religious

tests in order to prevent other religions from actually being in public office so this is a part of early American history.

So where did the spread of Islam come? It usually came from individuals the people who are called muhsininun and particularly from people that were associated with what was later termed the Sufiyah. These people had probably and there is a book called "The Role of Sufis in the Spread of Islam". Anybody who is from the Indian subcontinent and Pakistan knows that the spread of Islam is directly related to the famous awliya, they call them awliya, who came into that country and just by their presence and by their spiritual states many people became muslim. This is also true like Bosnia. It is very well known that the Ottomans did not have a policy on the Bosnians and it was the Qadri sufi order and the Beshti sufi order that went up into the mountains and began to call these people to Islam because they were always very active in proselytizing Islam. Now one of the things about people of tasawuf traditionally in the muslim world is that they were known for tolerance. They were people that were less condemnatory, less judgmental which is obviously why they were very successful in calling other people to Islam. I will give you an example, Habib Umar bin Mahfooz who is a Yemeni scholar and has a madrassah in Tarim, an American was studying with him and he said if you want to call people in America to Islam, then it is based upon a condition that whoever you talk to, you see them as better than you and he said the reason for that is Allah says "We do not punish people until we send them a messenger" and so those people who have not heard the message of Islam have an excuse with their Lord for whatever they are doing whereas any of your disobedience you have no excuse so that is a different way of looking at it. Instead of looking at people with contempt, you actually look at them with compassion. Instead of seeing them as your enemies you see them as your potential friends and brothers and that is what the Quran says "Perhaps God will put between those that you know feel animosity or enmity towards, put between you and them love and Allah is All Powerful, and Allah is all Forgiving and Merciful". Allah when He said to the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) you have nothing to do with this, if Allah wants to guide them and forgive them, that is His business. In other words the people who were treating them the worst at that time, when he saw his Uncle Hamza mutilated, he swore an oath he would mutilate 70 people from amongst them because was a Messenger from God but he was also masoom. His nature was impeccable, he was a human being and felt things strongly and he wept when he saw suffering, it caused him to move inside. He wept tears when he saw pain. He visited a sick man once and because the man was suffering he began to weep and when the sahaba saw his weeping they all began to weep. That was from visiting a sick man. So he was a human being. After seeing Hamza mutilated, the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said "If Allah wants He will guide them and He did guide both of them" (Hind and Wahshi). The two people who did that, Allah guided them and the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) took shahada from them and sat with them after swearing an oath that he would mutilate 70.

That is not your business and if you have that hatred or animosity in your heart, you are missing something very important about Allah's creation. So looking at people with compassion. I will tell you another very interesting thing. A lot of muslims do not know this. It is the opinion that makes most sense to me and because it is from an Imam Murshid and it is a valid opinion. It is from Imam al Ghazali from a book that he wrote. He categorises non muslims into three categories and places two of them in paradise so you think about that. He said non muslims fall into three categories:

1) Those who live under the justice of Islam and see the beauty and truth of Islam and reject it. He said these people are for hell. Or they live near the lands of Islam and know the benefits of Islam because in those days Hungarians used to flee from Christian rule to live in the Ottoman empire. Hungarian Christians and this is all documented. There was upward mobility which did not exist in the muslim world. Some of the greatest Ottoman sailors were not Turks, they were Greeks who fled the Greek navies because there was upward mobility in the Ottoman navy. You could actually move up, in the Greek navy if you were a man that just rowed the oars, that was your life because only aristocrats got into positions of authority. In the Ottoman empire, there was meritocracy so if you showed that you had leadership qualities, if you showed that you had that ability, you were upwardly mobile. Murada was a Scottish man who became an admiral in the Ottoman empire. He was a Scottish man, what you call renegados because in Britain a lot of the Scots and the Irish, because there was no upward mobility in England, if you were not born into the sacred caste of the Brahmins or if you were a Shadra stuck being an untouchable, the Dalits, that is it, that is how the world is. If you were born into a bricklayers house, you were a bricklayer whether you liked it or not irrespective of your abilities. Brilliant people are sons of bricklayers. In a meritocracy, you are allowed to be upwardly mobile which is often what the Ottoman empire was.

2) People who live far away from the lands of Islam and have not heard anything about Islam. That is the dominant Maturidi and Ashari opinion about those people. They are ahle-fitrah, they have the same hukm as the people between the messengers like the Arabs before Islam. That is the dominant opinion, there are other opinions but that is the dominant opinion. Ibn Rushid says when you talk about the rahmah of Allah, always try to expand it, do not try to restrict it. He said it is the nature of rahmah. He said the womb expands, it does not contract, it expands in order to accommodate the growth of the foetus. We want to contract it, that is called abortion. So that is the nature of rahmah, it expands to accommodate. A lot of people do not know what hell is and that is why there are so many people that are so quick to put people in hell because if you knew

what it was you would not want your worst enemy to go to hell. But people do not know what it is so they just want to send everybody there, the guy who raised his rent, go to hell.

3) People who have been taught since they were little that there was an impostor in the Arabian peninsula named Muhammad ibn Abdullah. He lied and claimed he was a Prophet. They are all terrorists and this and that. That is what they have heard. Imam Ghazali said these people have blocks to the truth because they were already indoctrinated. We know the power of this in modern psychology. The power of what happens when you are a child. When the Prophet emerged in the Arabian peninsula, those people had the opposite, they only had the positive opinions of him. The Quraysh only knew good from him. If you go to a people and all you hear since you are little is that this is a lie like Masonite Christians are taught since they are little children, this is an evil religion, an evil man and many Jewish people grow up with that as well that Islam is bad. So that creates blockages from the truth. Imam Ghazali said that he felt because it was presented to them in a distorted fashion they would not be held accountable for it. He said that in other words that to him seemed most consistent with divine justice.

So when you look at people out there, you should look with the eye of mercy. That is if you want to be effective. Allah says “God does not forgive that you associate with Him, He forgives whatever He wants after that”. That is important for us to remember. Now the other thing important to remember is according to our dominant theologians, shirk that you are taken to account for is the shirk that has been made clear to you because Allah says “do not associate with God once you know” and that is why when a man came to the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) he said “Masha’Allah, Allah willed and you willed” (Ibn Majah, Tabarani) but the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) did not call him a mushrik or kafir. He said “say Allah willed and then Muhammad willed”. You see he taught him how to remove that dangerous shirk. That is something very important for people to recognise. It is haram in Shariah according to Abu Bakr ibn Al Arabi, in Ahkam ul Quran, he said it is prohibited to make dua against any specific individual because you do not know their khatimah whereas you can make dua against enemies that are attacking muslims. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) made dua for people to lose battles and things like that because they were persecuting. Persecution is worse than killing. Making dua against individuals specifically is not something you should do and the few hadith in which the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) specifically mentioned individuals is considered to be unique to the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) because he knew some people, he was told. There is a hadith in the jariyah where a girl sang “we have a Prophet who knows what is going to happen tomorrow” and the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said “do not say that, just say what you were saying before”. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam)

did not say haram. We have all these muslims now that are ready to turn 90% of muslims into mushrikeen.

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/Dawah-How-to-Speak-to-People-of-Other-Faiths#sthash.OvoDChw4.dpuf>

Transcript for Conveying Islam at Oxford

Transcript Details

Event Name: Conveying Islam at Oxford

Transcript Author: Ihsanic Intelligence

Description: I have never heard of this speech before, and it doesn't look like it was published previously.

Date Transcribed: 2/2/2006 12:00:00 AM

Original URL: <http://ihsanic-intelligence.com/v3/wp-content/uploads/2006/02/2006-Conveying-Islam-at-Oxford-Sh.-Hamza-Yusuf.pdf>

Transcript Text

First of all, I want to thank all of you actually for coming out, for inviting me here. It's a great honor obviously to speak in a place that has an immense amount of history and many, many great people, I am sure, have spoken from this lectern. So, it's an honour to be a link in that chain.

I want to begin with a quote from a Scottish orientalist of the last century, actually, the beginning of the twentieth century when he wrote this, in 1902. His name was Duncan McDonald and he said, "If, as some say, the faith of Muhammad is a cul-desac, it is certainly a very long one. Off it, many courts and doors open. Down it, many peoples are still wandering. It is a faith too, which brings us into touching distance with the great controversies of our own day. We see in it, as in a somewhat distorted mirror, the history of our own past. It is a faith too, which brings us into touching distance but we do not yet see the end of this history, even as yet the end of Christianity is not in sight.

It is for the student then to remember that Islam is a present reality and the Muslim faith a living organism, a knowledge of whose laws may be of life or death for us who are in another camp." I'll repeat that: "A knowledge of whose laws may be of life or death for us who are in another camp. For there can be little doubt, that the three antagonistic and militant civilizations of the world are those of Christendom, Islam and China. When these are unified or come to a mutual understanding-then and only then-will the cause of civilization be secure. "I think that's a very pertinent quote that was stated by a very knowledgeable, and also prescient, man who realized

that we are indeed three great civilizations-China, Islam and the West, Christendom, which in some ways now is in a post-Christian era-certainly in Europe, not so much so in the Americas-but is still informed by Christian sensibilities.

If we look at how we view Islam in the West, there are two things-and Dr. Thomas Cleary raised this and I think it's a very interesting way of looking at it. He asked if we are people who inform ourselves from Christianity - we could ask ourselves, "Do we have a very Christian attitude towards Islam?" Christianity, one of the great precepts that was articulated by Jesus is "Judge not, lest ye be judged for by the standard by which ye judge, you too shall be judged." And then he followed that up by saying, "Why is it that you notice the speck in your brother's eye and are unaware of the plank in your own eye?"-[which is] a call to introspection.

Now, if on the other hand, we can argue it would be naïve to ask us to take that seriously vis-à-vis Islam, we can also ask ourselves if we are informed by natural and social science-"Is our attitude towards Islam a scientific attitude? Are we looking at it with objectivity? Have we really studied this religion in order for us to articulate informed opinions about it, whether positive or negative?" One of the things about our current situation in the West, if you look at it is, when Islam is mentioned, people are willing to articulate the most prejudiced views without any hesitation and feel they are quite informed by doing so. They might have been informed by journalists, or what they saw on television, but if you ask them "Have you ever read the Qur'an? Have you ever read any of [sayings of] the collections of the Prophet Muhammad? Have you ever read sera, or a life of the Prophet Muhammad?" And more often than not, you will hear "No." So, it's very interesting that we are often very opinionated, vis-à-vis Islam, and it's associated with some of the most backward aspects of the current situation.

Muslims are often seen as misogynistic, against women's rights; want to throw the clock out. There are a lot of Muslims that actually have a hard time with time, keeping time, and things like that so they might actually agree with that one. Jonathan Swift has a group of people that considered his character to actually worship the clock because he never did anything without consulting it. In the West, we tend to be very focussed on the importance of time. In the Muslim world, the anthropologists call their time "polychronic time" as opposed to Western "monochromic" time. So we haven't yet invented poly-chronic watches that will enable people to be late for appointments and still be on time. But if you are informed by social sciences then it

would seem you would be willing to examine this religion before you articulated your opinions about it.

Now, the first thing I think is interesting is that there is a verse in the Qur'an, "LA ikhraha fi deen-There is no compulsion in this religion." [Holy Qur'an, 2:256] And one of the things we tend to not think about is inward compulsion. In other words, we are often outwardly coerced, or we recognize outward coercion, but the idea of being inwardly coerced by our own biases and prejudices. The ability to actually suspend our frames of reference -that are often quite negative-because many of us in the West have inherited an enormous amount of baggage vis-à-vis the Muslim world and so it becomes very difficult to actually look with objectivity at the Muslim world. Much of what is being articulated today is the rehashing of hackneyed canards about Islam that went on for centuries-really, it's actually quite extraordinary. And many people who consider themselves to be educated will actually say these things that they have heard, grown up with or read in a journal or in a magazine. So, it's very important if we are to move beyond the realm of prejudice that we actually begin to examine internally what's going on, and what's informing our opinions and our views.

Now, I could argue the very same thing in the Muslim world, trust me. But I'm speaking tonight here in the United Kingdom and so I'm speaking to us in the West. If I was speaking to the Muslims in the East, I would be saying many of the same things but directing them at them. I'll tell you why and give you one example. Recently with the tragedy in Denmark, the Muslims broke out [in violent protest] all over, or some Muslims-actually, quite a small minority in reality when you look at the fact the Muslim world is over a billion people, the people that actually went out and demonstrated are statistically insignificant number of people. But nonetheless the media magnifies this immensely and so what we see is this amplified far beyond its actual reality.

If you look at what the Muslims did, they basically took an entire country to account for the actions of a few individuals which is very ironic because the very thing that many Muslims are very troubled [by] about the West is this idea of taking the Muslims to account for a collective guilt for what a handful of Muslims have done. So, again, this is as the Arabs say, "Ba'akum tajiru wa ba'ila tajur-Your preposition works but mine doesn't." In other words, the rules of grammar apply for you and your worth, but they don't apply for me. So, there is this double standard on both sides which is very problematic.

Tonight, I don't want to in any way say there aren't very serious problems in the Muslim world. But I really want to put the onus on us to look a little differently at our situation.

One of the major problems confronting us as an increasingly globalised community is the still very, very relevant problem of racism. And in many ways, race itself has [been] shown to be a very ungrounded unscientific way of viewing people. The idea somehow that we're different from one another in some essential way has been really thrown out the window. We have differences in our complexion which is celebrated in the Qur'an. The Qur'an talks about: "Surely in the creation of the Heavens and the Earth and in the variety of your tongues and your complexions are signs of wonderment." [Holy Qur'an, 30:22] - Signs of the Power of God. So, it's actually celebrating this diversity. It's not seeing it as a source of animosity, of antagonism, but actually seeing something to be celebrated.

Another very intriguing verse in the Qur'an is that, "O humanity! We have created you from a plurality of peoples and tribes-or people and clans-in order for you to come to know one another, in order for you to come to know one another. Surely, the most noble amongst you are the most conscientious." [Holy Qur'an, 49:13] So, this verse actually once again, is giving us a reason for the plurality of complexions, of cultures, of civilisation-it is this idea of mutually benefiting from one another. It's something very interesting.

Arnold Toynbee said a lot of things that did not happen and he had some overarching theories that a lot of more recent historians have trashed. But in his essay "Islam and the West", it's really one of the most prescient things I've ever seen in history because [one] of the things he said was: "Islam may awaken humanity once again, as it has done in the past. And it might be precipitated by a race war between the West and the peoples of the South"-Africa, Asia, South Asia and also South America. But one of the interesting things he said was that the zealots are a constantly re-emerging group within the Islamic tradition. He says they are basically unsuccessful in the long run, but they do create problems. He identified three areas where he felt they would be problematic-Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Afghanistan-and this was in 1947.

And he said it would probably be left to one of the Western nations to have to deal with this "nuisance", and that's actually the word he used to describe it. But in that essay, he said, "We have an immense amount to learn from the religion of Islam. One of the things we can learn from the religion of Islam is the issue of the plurality of races." I think that's something. The fact that

he acknowledged that is quite extraordinary, which does not mean there is not behavior that's prejudiced in the Muslim world but Islam has never, ever, justified racism. Moreover, the founder of Islam himself articulated in no uncertain terms in his farewell pilgrimage. He said, "There is no preference over a whiteman over a black man, or a black man over a white man. There is no preference over an Arab over a non-Arab, or a non-Arab over an Arab. All of you are from Adam and Eve, and Adam and Eve were from dust." And so he articulated, very clearly, the idea of the brotherhood and sisterhood of humanity and this is something that we should celebrate about Islam. It is one of the great gifts of Islam, because I find no historical precedence for this articulation and I would love for somebody to edify me if there was. I've never seen it articulated so clearly, so early, over 1,400 years ago. I haven't seen a historical personality articulate the brotherhood of man in that way and it something in many ways Muslims are proud of.

Another thing that's very interesting about Islam is the idea of commerce by mutual benefit and mutual agreement. The Qur'an says, "La ta'kul amwalukum baynakumbil batil-Do not consume your wealth amongst you unjustly, but rather let your commerce be with mutual agreement." [Holy Qur'an, 4:29] And it's followed up by averse immediately saying, "And do not kill yourselves. "One of the main reasons for wars is economic injustices, imbalance in distribution of wealth-the idea of appropriating the wealth of certain peoples without giving them their just due. This is a major problem that the Qur'an beautifully articulates that all of commerce should be with this mutual agreement; a win-win situation. And this is something I feel. If you look currently at much of the Muslim world, a lot of the problems relate directly to this immense economic disparity. The exploitation of an immense amount of Muslim wealth and the fact that much of that wealth is not recycled back into the Muslim community. I can give you two examples of that. One, the seventh largest purchaser of arms on the planet is Saudi Arabia-the seventh largest-immediately, after India. In essence, much of that wealth is corporate welfare for armaments builders in the United States and Britain-wealth that should really be building infrastructure for the people from whom that wealth is derived, from their lands. There are many Muslims⁵that recognize these problems and it creates an immense amount of animosity. When there is not commercial parity, when there is not respect for the other in one's commercial transactions, an immense amount of resentment builds up.

Now, the Muslim world (and this is another aspect) - is that I think there's an immense amount the Muslim world can learn from the West-I really believe there are things we can learn from Islam-but I also believe there's an immense amount that Muslims today can learn from the West. One of the great tragedies in the Muslim world is the tragedy of failed states. And many of us

have no idea what it is like to live in a country where you do not have redress to the basic wrongs that occur in society, when court systems do not function, when there is no judicial review. These are immense problems in the Muslim world. Currently, the problem is not democracy because democracy cannot be established in the Muslim world.

I do not believe democracy can be established currently in the Muslim world because the social institutions that are necessary for democracy to come about simply do not exist. And I'll give you one example because I'm an adherent to the congruence theory in sociology and one of the basic principles of that theory is that governments are only effective to the degree in which the governing model is congruent with the other social institutions of society. So, government is effective to the degree in which the model of governance permeates the other social institutions of society. So, if you have a despotic government, it is effective when you have despotic schools, when you have despotic families, when you have despotic unions, when you have despotic trade unions and when you have despotic political parties.

Like or contrary-wise, democracy is only effective to the degree with which you have democratic institutions. I'll give you one example that many people in the West have no idea of. In much of the Muslim world, in the schools today there is not the idea of asking questions, or questioning the authority of the teacher. The teacher's authority is almost absolute. And this is still widespread, and it [is] absolutely hard to believe. You have very despotic educational institutions and therefore people who grow up in that despotic environment naturally-if they ever get into positions of power, whether it's at the most basic governmental level-they begin to express those despotic models that were imbibed in their schools, often in their families, where the father has an absolute word. And these models, which were quite common in the West not that long ago-but an immense amount of work went into eradicating many of these models.

One of the things that my Arab friends are very surprised about when they come to America, and I've seen this on many occasions, is the idea of offering your child a choice for what it's going to eat for dinner-"What would you like to have for dinner tonight?" I've seen Arab friends of mine that said, "That's so crazy to ask a child what it wants for dinner!" But that question is part of enfranchisement. It's part of having a democratic household where children actually have a say, where children can choose. It's learning how to choose which is a process. And this unfortunately does not exist in many parts of the Muslim world-the idea of an elective system. I've had people who have come from the Muslim world to study in America and went into shock when they were asked to choose their classes because it was the first time in their life when they were not told

what to study. And some of them were at a loss because they had never really thought about that. What Ericson calls "identity foreclosure" is very common in the Muslim world-where you do what your father tells you to do. You study what your father tells you to study. You do not follow your passion which is actually very alien to the Islamic tradition, but unfortunately quite common in the Muslim world.

One of the things that one of the early educational theorists of Islam, Qadi AbuBakr ibn al-Arabi, who is a great Andalusian scholar, said was, "It was very important to observe a child's natural intellectual inclinations and then to encourage them to pursue those intellectual inclinations because the natural genius of that child would emerge. If a child was forced to study what it did not have natural propensities towards, it would thwart its intellectual development." This was in a text that was written in the sixth Islamic century. Imam al-Ghazali, for instance, in his book on pedagogy, talks about never humiliating a child in front of other children, quite a common occurrence in much of the Muslim world in classrooms where children are humiliated. I mean these are very serious problems that result in many of the social conditions that we find very troubling in the Muslim world.

Now, just as the West has gone through an immense amount of transformation-not always positive by the way, but we have gone through an immense amount of transformation-we tend to forget that much of what we have inherited is a result of extraordinarily stupid (and there's no other word, really - asinine, perhaps)-extraordinarily stupid religious wars that occurred in the sixteenth, the seventeenth and even the eighteenth century. Wars that really led intellectuals in some ways to really question this whole idea of a religious intolerance. It led to people like Thomas Hobbes, somebody who was also influenced by Henry Stubbs, an extraordinary man who was very impressed with the Ottoman tradition of religious tolerance and wrote a book during that time, in the mid-seventeenth century, called *The Rise and Progress of Mohammedanism* and had an immense amount of praise.

Another extraordinary seventeenth century character here at Oxford, Edward Pococke-there's actually a picture of him on the wall. Edward Pococke was a man who went to Aleppo to study Islam and this is in 1630. And you can imagine this is an extraordinary time to go to the Muslim world. One of the things that struck him about the Muslim world was the tolerance. He became very well-acquainted with the Muslim scholars of Aleppo and writes very lovingly about these scholars. He also became acquainted with the Jewish scholars. He sat in circles where the Jews,

the Christians and the Muslims discussed their religious texts in ways much more enlightened than the current dialogue going on today.

And when he came back to Oxford, he collected over four hundred Arabic manuscripts that are still here in the Bodleian Library. The Chair of Arabic studies was founded and he was its first Chair. I believe this an extraordinary event in Western history. He had an immense respect for the Muslim world. He was a teacher, but also a friend of John Locke-and John Locke was very influenced by his ideas. The extraordinary fairness of Edward Gibbon, given the limited resources that he had, in *The Decline and the Fall of the Roman Empire* towards Islam. If you look at his sources, many of his quotes are taken directly from Edward Pococke's works in which he recognized some of the really beautiful qualities of Islam. It's also very interesting that Gibbon mentions in his history that "Had the Muslims conquered-that is, in 732, defeated Charles Martel-perhaps the students of Oxford today would be circumcised and be studying the truths of the Qur'an and the teachings of Muhammad." So, he actually envisaged that possibility because it was a real possibility-but it did not happen.

Nonetheless, the teachings of Islam should be taught here and they should be taught with fairness. People should be open to listen to that voice, a voice that in the deepest way possible informs the sensitivities and sensibilities upon millions and millions of people walking the Earth-one out of five people. If we are really to promote dialogue, to promote civil discourse, these things we hold very dear, I think the onus is on us to open this dialogue up, to have a broader vision. Much of what you are witnessing in the Muslim world is the frustrations of peoples whose dreams have been deferred. And people who do not dream, perish, as the Bible says, "A people without a vision, perish." Dreams are what make us human and I really want to stress this idea of dreaming. The moral imagination, the ability to actually envisage things different to the way they are. Much of what we have inherited was not of our making, but nonetheless we have inherited social institutions, ways in which we view the world. And we as the current residents of this planet in a long, long chain of inhabitants, we have to ask ourselves, "Are these institutions serving us? Are they fulfilling the functions they were created to fulfill? Is the commonwealth being enhanced or diminished?" These are questions we have to ask ourselves because we have inherited an immense amount of baggage and that baggage might not be the best to carry on our journey. But we are increasingly becoming interdependent and globalized. In many ways, we have always been interdependent. The meal that you ate, if you ate one this evening, this afternoon or this morning, if you contemplate what went into it coming to your plate-people

picking rice in Ceylon, people picking tea-leaves and rolling them in Assam, the plate that might have been made in China, the fork that might have been made in America or Germany, the people that delivered them—all of us, interdependent and often failing to recognize how much we owe to each other. One of the Arab poets said, "Everyone, whether they are Bedouin or they are settled, is serving, without realising it, each other." We have to really question the conditions we find ourselves in and how we can get out of them and I believe much of it is through increasing dialogue, speaking to each other with respect.

One of the tragic realities of this fiasco in Denmark is that many people in the West suddenly began defending this idea of "freedom of expression", this sacred right, instead of enjoining civic responsibility and just this idea of mutual respect. We can perhaps criminalize something but sometimes things should be condemned because they are simply breaches of basic common decency. I am all for people examining Islam, criticising Islam, discussing Islam but the idea of gratuitous insults, of denigrating people, we really have to question whether it's worth it—the amount of madness that was created. We have to in some ways recognize that if that potential exists, then there's need for some type of responsibility. It's very important that we question what we are doing to promote a more civic society.

I really hope, especially amongst the students here, about "the deferred dream".

Langston Hughes asks that question from The Harlem Renaissance, "What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun or fester like a sore and then run? "It's a question—what happens to dreams deferred? He is talking about the black people in the United States. Then he says, "Or does it stink like rotten meat or crust and sugar over like a syrupy sweet? Or maybe it hangs like a heavy load? Or does it explode?" I think all of those responses occur in the human heart, but the idea of holding on to this ability to envision a different world and set out to do something about that.

I was saying to somebody tonight—at the dinner table he was too young to be a cynic already—that's why it's important for you to hold on to those ideals and to take them into the world. In many ways, some of the highest ideals we treasure and cherish in the West are being entirely undermined. In some ways, we're not aiming high enough and we end up shooting a fellow hunter in the back when we have our sights set too low.

The fact we can ask "The Torture Question" is very troubling to me because I know enough of the history of Western civilization to know that people died so that torture would no longer be a practice in the jails and prisons of the West. I don't accept the idea we are under some grave threat that necessitates extreme measures. We lived under the threat of nuclear annihilation during the Cold War and nobody justified torture during that period-whether they practiced it or not is another matter-but it was certainly not justified.

We, I think in the West, have an immense amount to do, especially the young people in this room and I don't envy you for the journey you have ahead. I don't envy you. We're facing immense calamities; we should be facing them collectively as a species as opposed to groups or nations, because these calamities are much greater than the individual problems we have that separate us. In some ways, those individual problems that separate us, it is the aggregate of those problems that's causing much of these calamities. So, both cannot be ignored.

I truly believe that we have to envision a different world and I think it's possible.

I believe in dialogue. I believe much of what we can do in the West is simply to listen to the Muslims. Simply to listen to the Muslims, listen to the pain. I don't think we've done enough listening. I've lived in the Muslim world. I've listened to people. There's much validity in what's said and a lot of it is totally invalid. But what you do when you listen is that you suspend those types of judgments in order for some kind of healing to come about.

I believe the same is due in the Muslim world. That they also need to listen and the only way we can encourage that is through dialogue, through discussion. The path of civilisation is a path of discussion; it's a path of dialogue. Civil society is something we should encourage not only at home, but abroad also. But if we don't have a civil society ourselves, if we're not encouraging a civil society ourselves, how can we take it to other people? How can we help other people to do that? I believe in many of the principles of this society, Great Britain. I think truly it's a great country. I love many of the great people of this country. I love the Hannah Moores, the Edwin Arnolds.

Edwin Arnold was an extraordinary man. He was actually the editor of The Daily Telegraph and wrote two great poems. One of them was The Light of Asia in which he tried to introduce Buddhism, the Chinese culture and civilization into the West because he felt it was very important that we came to know Asia. Then he followed that up with The Ninety-Nine Names of

God from the Islamic tradition. In the introduction to that book, he said, "Islam cannot be scornfully thrust aside but it must be conciliated-We cannot scornfully thrust aside Islam, we must conciliate it-because it shares a task with its sister religions in the edification of the peoples of this planet."9I really truly and honestly believe we have an immense amount to learn from our religious traditions. I believe Islam has an immense amount to teach us, if we're open to it. You don't have to believe in Islam as a Divine revelation but [only] to recognize it as the genius of human possibility. George Sale translated the Qur'an and it was published in 1734-[and] in one its fair translations. In the introduction, he said it's time we stopped denigrating this man - and this is 1734 - and we have failed to learn this lesson today. He said it's time we stopped denigrating this man and simply recognized him as one of the great law-givers of humanity. He's honored it the fresco at the Supreme Court of United States of America with the other great law-givers of the world-honored as a law-giver.

I really believe we need to come to know who the Prophet Muhammad was as a human being-what he stood for, what he believed in.

I didn't embrace Islam to join a tribe and to stand and "Rah-Rah" with my tribe, right or wrong. It's not what I joined Islam for. I joined Islam because it was something I believed to be true. It was the truest thing that had appeared to me up to that point and I have yet to find something truer. And if I did, to be true to myself, would have to go to that thing.

But even if you don't see it as true in its totality, to recognize the great truths in it and the great benefits of it, it would do an enormous amount to you own personal edification.

I believe truly, all of us, have something to learn from Islam and if we acknowledge that and acknowledge the already existing debt that Europe-and by extension the United States-owes to the great civilization of Islam that has been acknowledged by some of the great historians of human civilization. I think if that is acknowledged, that would be an immense step towards reconciliation between these two great civilizations. Many Muslims feel they are constantly scornfully thrust aside, that the past of Islam and much of its greatness is not recognized, the indebtedness of the West to the Islam of Spain, of the Renaissance in Italy, three hundred years of Islamic rule in Sicily, six hundred years of rule in Greece. The Parthenon was used as a mosque for seventy years. This is a great deal of history and the influences need to be examined and we can begin by digging up some of these treasures like Edward Pococke. I hope somebody

takes that seriously here and goes and finds out who he was and what he stood for because he had a great influence of John Locke. Locke's biographers say that he was one of the greatest influences on Locke's thinking and ideas-and "The Treatise of Toleration", I believe, is indebted to the Ottoman practice of the millet system and the idea of a pluralistic culture.

I want to see pluralism. People are saying the multicultural state has failed. I don't think it's been tried yet, I really don't. We're assuming a failure before we've even attempted to practice this. But we need to help each other get beyond our prejudices.

Prejudice is an antipathy that results from inflexible generalizations that are uninformed.

There is too much prejudice on all sides and I really think we need to examine ourselves, to really look in ourselves and ask that question.

I want to finish this by a quote from another great historian, Samuel Scott, who wrote a history- The History of the Moorish Empire in Europe. It's a three-volume work that was published over a hundred years ago and he really records the immense indebtedness of the West to Islam.

He says: "To undertake the radical amelioration of such political and social conditions that existed in the pre-Islamic Arabian world was a task of apparently insuperable difficulty. Its fortunate accomplishment may not indicate the active interposition of Divine authority, the glories which invest the history of Islam may be entirely derived from the valor, the virtue, the intelligence, the genius of man. If this be conceded, the largest measure of credit is due to him who conceived his plan, promoted its impulse and formulated the rules which ensured its success. In any event, if the object of religion be the inculcation of morals, the diminution of evil, the promotion of human happiness, the expansion of the human intellect, if the performance of good works will avail on that Great Day when mankind shall be summoned to its final reckoning, it is neither irreverent nor unreasonable to admit Muhammad was an Apostle of God. "Thank you very much.

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/Conveying-Islam-at-Oxford#sthash.ttASITBl.dpuf>

Transcript for Changing the Tide

Transcript Details

Event Name: Changing the Tide

Transcript Author: Bezado

Description: desc

Date Transcribed:

Original URL: <http://www.ummah.com/forum/showthread.php?89985-Imam-Hamza-Yusuf-s-Speech>

The following is a rough transcript (from my memory) of the powerful and moving speech that Shaykh Hamza Yusuf gave to the ICNA Symposium on 1877-Why-Islam one week ago, when he came to New Jersey after a long time. I was lucky enough to get a seat in the sold out event held in one of New Jersey's largest state theatre: the 2,500 seat Ritz Theatre in Elizabeth which was again filled to capacity. If you missed the event, I am sending you this and insha'Allah it'll be of benefit.

Again the following are the main points of Imam Hamza's speech to my best of my knowledge. I tried my best to list them, and ask for forgiveness if any parts are missing or stated incorrectly. Shaykh Hamza Yusuf Hanson was born in Washington State and raised in Northern California. In 1977, he became Muslim and subsequently traveled to the Muslim world and studied for ten years in the U. A. E., Saudi Arabia, as well as North and West Africa. He also founded Zaytuna Institute which has established an international reputation for presenting a classical picture of Islam in the West and which is dedicated to the revival of traditional study methods and the sciences of Islam. Shaykh Hamza is the first American lecturer to teach in Morocco's prestigious and oldest University, the Karaouine in Fes. In addition, he has translated into modern English several classical Arabic traditional texts and poems. Shaykh Hamza currently resides in Northern California with his wife and five children.

START SPEECH

Bismillah. AssalaamuWasalaam A'la-RasoolAllah Wa'Ala-Ashabee Ajmaeen.

I would just like to say there I have nothing but great love for ICNA and this organization. Unfortunately I couldn't speak or take previous invitations for no other reasons except scheduling conflicts. I'm invited on the same 4th of July weekend in California as ICNA holds its annual convention. Unfortunately my annual invitation in California over the 4th of July weekend is made by my cardiologist, which means, that I must go otherwise my heart could be at risk ... {Laughter}

In any case, I'm glad to be here tonight. Masha'Allah we have Imam Chebli here with us. As Muslims we must all acknowledge that we must treat all communities with respect. We have got

to stop being self-righteous as if "we are the chosen people" of God. Many times in the past we've made, including myself, some statements, which I later come to regret. Not because of any posturing but because my previous comments were not Islamically sanctioned, neither by the Koran or the example of the Prophet. We human beings are constantly growing and changing. We may say things at one time but regret it another, not because we are afraid; but because we have grown wiser, prudent, and more mature. We are ever changing just as a seed grows into a young plant (and they don't look alike) and just as a young plant matures into a fully grown tree (again the two appears different at two time periods) the overall changing and maturing is a process. Similarly, we human beings are constantly growing, maturing, and changing. And hopefully for the better, which is called wisdom. If you are not changing than you're not alive...right...I mean that's one of the characteristic of life adaptation...If you're not changing then you might as well be dead.

It comes as no surprise then to realize that our community is under siege. I don't know if there is anyone who feels otherwise. If you don't think that our community is under siege right now, then I'm not sure if you're even alive.

But our situation right here in America is still better than the situation of our brethren in many Western European nations, where there is open hostility and antagonism against Muslims just under the surface. I am talking about countries such as Netherlands, France, Germany, Belgium. Laws are being made there openly challenging our religiosity. They are creating "tests" for immigrants, particularly for those from Muslim countries and checking their "loyalty" and forcing them to see homosexual acts on films to test their limits on "tolerance." This is not tolerance it is racism, nationalism, and xenophobia.

When I went to Denmark to speak after the cartoon controversy, I must say that we found people on the streets who knew nothing about Islam or Muslims. And I must attest the Danes were a genuinely nice people, a majority of whom didn't support the cartoons or the editor's decision to run them (Those gratuitously denigrating someone they perceive to be our Prophet). We Muslims are being manipulated by the press and being used as pawns in their ugly game. We react just as expected giving them fuel and additional ratings. We must stop and use our heads.

We have to get the message across that it is not ok to defend the right to offend. You can criticize us all you want, but don't be gratuitously rude, offensive, and insulting. Just as it is not ok in some European countries to deny the Holocaust... in fact it is a criminal offense. Just as it is against the law to make hate speech based on race, we Muslims should make it clear that we derive our self-identity from our faith; just as some African Americans derive their identity from race.

By Allah, to me my Islamic identity is many times greater than my race, creed, or what have you. Unlike racial identity which goes only skin deep, our religious identity runs all the down to our hearts. It defines who we are. This is a pin of my clan and ancestors from Scotland (pointing towards an insignia on his suit) during my visit to that country. My clans motto is ferrero ferrero which means we are ferocious towards those who are ferocious towards us. [Imam Hamza chuckles]. That should be an Islamic motto [laughs]. Well that's human nature, isn't it?

Denmark has a very just and lenient refugee policy, the best in all of Europe. It has the lowest corruption in the world, all of which are noble Islamic policies. And some Muslims haven't lived

up to their end of the bargain. The highest crime rate in Denmark is amongst the Muslim population, esp. those of North African descent including Somalia.

The fact of the matter is we haven't explained Islam to people, esp. in the West. There was a recent Gallup poll done which asked, "What is the first word that comes to your mind when you think What Good Islam Has To Offer?..." A majority 56% said, "Islam has nothing good to offer." That's a solid majority who believes that, but what's ironic is that an even greater majority 60% admitted they knew very little or nothing about Islam or Muslims. When in fact the Islam took the Europe out of the Dark Ages, and Islamic inventors offered their creations to the rest of the world...

Now the second most common response was (by 34% of respondents) was "I like their devotion and religiosity." [Silence...] That's a good thing folks! We need more of that and less of "nothing good to offer," and we do that by telling our non-Muslim friends, neighbors, colleagues about who we are. We have to define who we are and don't let some hate-monger define Muslims to the American people.

One of the tragedies is any American who wants to know more about Islam is being bombarded with negative aspects. This is the strategy being employed by them. Just by the fact the number of Islamophobic books being published and ending up on the bestseller list. Just walk into Barnes and Noble or any bookstore and you will find books distorting the real essence of Islam. And unfortunately people who know nothing about Islam take the people who write such distortions at face value because they have Ph.D's next to their name. All of a sudden these people who knew nothing about Islam before 9/11 become experts on our religion overnight? I mean one of the best ways to make money these days, is being an apostate from the religion and you'll instantly become a media darling. They'll harp on how courageous you are in holding up your beliefs. (My own words: But if you're a Muslim woman wearing your headscarf after 9/11, then your not brave in holding up your beliefs but rather "oppressed").

One of such books called Infiltration by Paul Sperry has even blacklisted me on one of his pages by a 2005 speech I gave during ISNA. He says I'm an Islamist sympathizer which means I better watch what I say tonight and behave. {Laughter}.

Seriously, publishing these books has become an industry. One of the fastest ways of making money is to become an apostate from Islam. There is nothing better that conservatives like better than parading a former Muslim who hates his own faith. Its similar to parading black people during the Republican Party Conventions because African Americans have usually voted Democratic. They try and portray themselves as an "all inclusive" party whereas the facts and their policies are not. (In another speech with Chris Hedges Imam Hamza said insha'Allah it'll be welcoming to see if the Republicans should lose this upcoming election in '06). Showing a former Muslim is also a very clever, cunning, and a dangerous strategy. We should be aware of it. It is sending a message that, "What good does Islam have to offer if Muslims themselves are leaving their own faith?" The agenda is a very cynical, deceitful, and their message is one of lies. And if we don't have Muslims writing books or countering their hate that "Islam teaches violence" then the easily impressionable non-Muslim, who lacks any fundamental knowledge of Islam, would accept what these people have to say as a fact. (My own words: God-forbid we are held responsible for not passing on the correct teaching in front of Allah on the Day of Judgment). At the heart of Islam is peace. The religion's essence is peace. He was a Prophet of

peace during a time of war and conflict. Our noble messenger Muhammad (saws) prayed for peace during every prayer, 5 times a day imploring: "Oh Allah you are peace, and from you flows peace, let me live in peace, and let me die in peace, for you are The Lord of Majesty and Generosity." He (saws) brought warring tribes together in peace and ushered in an era of peace not known to fractious and constantly warring Arabia.

So now is the time to educate people about Islam and who was the Prophet Muhammad. The respect our scholars had for the Prophet, I think must not be lost on us. There was once a scholar who was walking with his student beside him. As they were walking the student recited a hadith and sought clarification. The Shaykh replied, I never thought you, of all my students, would recite a Hadith of the holy messenger standing up. Subsequently the shaykh lost respect for him. Of course this doesn't apply in situation such as giving a khutbah on a pulpit or giving a speech, but it is indicative of the degree of love and respect we should have towards our beloved Messenger (saws).

Some people asked me what I thought about Franklin Graham calling Islam wicked. I didn't know he had said that until it was brought to my attention. I have met him in person and have shook hands with him. If I knew he said that then I would have reminded him to think twice before shaking hands w/ the devil. (Laughs).

Last week I did a program on Radio and gave a speech with a very interesting guy called Chris Hedges who holds a doctorate from Harvard Divinity school, was a foreign reporter for the NY Times, and has traveled throughout the world, including many countries in the Middle East. The subject of the topic was, "Does God Love war?" And Chris mentioned a very important point. He said that out of his 15 experiences of war torn regions, all of them began with one side spreading propaganda, creating fear and hate within their population against the "other." There was a systematic attempt to demonize the other side before war began and the same thing is happening right now in America today.

I have five boys and I don't want them growing up in an era of fighting and war. You must be a fool if you did. These people who want war are warmongers. They are planning war against Iran and we must do all we can as American Muslims, as the community who stands in the middle, as bridge connecting the two, to stop them. We love this country's ideals and don't want it to go down a wrong path or take a plunge. And I say today, Wallahee (By God), Wallahee (By God), if they declare a war against Islam, they will NEVER be able to defeat Islam. [Roaring applause. Takbeer...Again strong applause].

There was a book which says Militant Islam comes to America? The only reason militant Islam came to America is because militant America went over there. [Applause.] We talk about winning hearts and mind in the Muslim world...well I'm no scholar of international law...but I sure would give advice any time of the day to the State Department that you don't win hearts and minds by dropping bombs on peoples heads. You don't drop bombs on their heads, and then expect to win their hearts. That is very hard in general for people to do.{small laughter from audience}

Our nation is willing to spend billions of dollars in finding ways to produce weapons that are engineered in killing people most effectively while we are ignoring the millions of people who are dying in Africa of basic hunger?

The world looks up to the United States for leadership. There is a lot of good things happening in this country. We are blessed that we have the freedom to say and gather in this great State of New Jersey without government interference or intervention. There are researchers doing study on diseases day and night. What if the Bird Flu breaks out and afflicts the world tomorrow? The world would be looking for the United States for leadership and cures. But in spite of that, more and more money is being diverted to military programs to the detriment of so many other social programs, including fighting HIV and AIDS. Weapons are being sold to countries locked in wars and disputes. The Prophet Muhammad said Allah would reserve the deepest depths of hell for those who'd sell arms during times of strife [Gasps of bewilderment from audience]. I'd like to quote a sentence from the philosopher that our current leader looks up to as his greatest role model (referring to Jesus) who said, "Blessed are the peacemakers for they for they shall be called the children of God."

America was great when we put our interests over a foreign nation...[pause]... [Repeats] Puts our interest above a foreign nation's... [Crowd understands and applauds]. Lastly in closing I must say we are all ambassadors of our deen. The founding American values which this country is based on, the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, has a lot in common with Islamic values. I would just like to see Americans being Americans and Muslims being Muslims. If both live up to their basic ideals, I honestly feel we wouldn't have so much problems today.

There is a thing called soft power and hard power as coined by an American Professor at Princeton University. He described hard power as anything of or relating to force and military strength. And soft power is the power of talk, dialogue, discussion, and persuasion...to persuade the other side of your viewpoint without force. And I firmly believe Islam at its very root has a tremendous, overwhelming power to persuade anyone open to reason. All we need to do is convey the message. We don't need to dress up Islam, just pass the essential Islam to those unfamiliar with it. For we Muslims for far too long have used hard power, its time to use soft power. W'salaamAlaikum [Generous, hearty applause]

THE END

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/Changing-the-Tide#sthash.dEb2dEJG.dpuf>

Transcript for Between Ignorance and Extremism

Transcript Details

Event Name: Between Ignorance and Extremism

Transcript Author: Amina Nawaz. Edited by Karen Nooruddin

Description:

Date Transcribed: 1/1/2001 12:00:00 AM

Original URL: <http://with-the-truthful.blogspot.com/2008/12/shaykh-hamza-yusuf-hanson-between.html>

Transcript Text

The Radical Middle Way: Between Ignorance and Extremism

Like Sidi Abdal Hakim said, “Tradition or extradition” - it's not a joke, and people really have to think about the presence of over 25 million Muslims in Western Europe. We have to really think about what we're doing here, what we're planning to do here in the future. For those of you who have children, you have to really think about what's going to be the situation of your children and your children's children. I mean, these are really serious situations. Unfortunately, we have *sufaha*.

We have people who are simply *safeeh*(foolish), and I don't care how sincere they are, there are plenty of sincere people out there but we have people who are fools. They are foolish people. There are people that read things and take them literally. This is what Shaykh Abdallah was talking about. You have *naqal* and you have '*aqal*... Unfortunately, we have some *naqal*-heads out there.

We have people who are not using their intellect when they read verses. Don't think these people haven't been around since the beginning, really. They believe they are rightly guided and our Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said “*Yahmilu hadha al-ilm min kul qarnin uduluhu*” – that this knowledge will be carried in each generation by upright people, “*yanfunu 'anhu tah rith al-ghalīn*”– they'll repudiate the misquotations of extremists.

Tah rīth is – *yuh arrif al-kalim ‘an muwād i’i* – is to take something out of context. So the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said that rightly guided scholars will repudiate the misquotations of extremists – *wa intih āl al-mubtilīn*, and plagiarisms of people that are trying to undermine the religion or attack the religion, these are just fabrications, people that fabricate – *wa ta’wīl al-jahilīn* - and interpretations of zealots, of ignorant people.

Now there’s no doubt that the Muslims are suffering in many different places. But again, this is not new. There have been many many periods where Islam was under siege, had troubles, had difficulties. We have two sunnah. In fact, we have three sunnah. We have the sunnah of the prophet in Mecca. One of the things that Ibn Taimiyyah said (*rahimahu Allah*) is that there’s nothing that’s abrogated in Islam so that if the same circumstance(s) in which a ruling was applicable returns, then the earlier ruling becomes applicable to the present circumstance(s) as well. In other words, there’s no absolute abrogation. There is no verse in the Qur’an that’s absolutely abrogated with the exception of about four verses on which there is no difference of opinion. All of the verses in the Qur’an (*Wasbir ‘ala ma yaqulun, wahjurhum hajirun jamilah, lasta ‘alayhim bi musaytir, laysta ‘alayhim bi wakil, laysta ‘alayhim bi jabar*) are verses in which the Prophet was told to be patient. Those verses are all applicable because that’s the sunnah of Mecca.

One of the things Hudaybiyya Ibn al Yamaan said is "In the end of time,(*yukhair al-maru bayn al-‘aji wa al-fujur*), and of the tabi’in listening to this (*qabaha Allahu al-‘ajaz*), *Qabahak Allahu anta – al-‘aju khairun min al-fujur*," He said that there will be a time when people will be given a choice between powerlessness and going to extremes (*fajara* means to go beyond a limit). One of the tabi’in heard him say this and said, "May Allah make ugly powerlessness." To this, Hudaybiyya Ibn al Yamaan replied, "May Allah make you ugly. Powerlessness is better than going outside of the boundaries."

So the sunnah of *ibtihal*, the sunnah of being oppressed is Makkah. Look how the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) behaved. One of the reasons that I stayed a Muslim was when I studied the seerah, the period of Makkah was an overwhelming period. Anybody that studies it has to come to that conclusion about our Prophet (s.a.w.s.). It’s what made him great. And if you’re denying the Makkan period, you’re denying something that’s absolutely overwhelming...there’s more time in Makkah than there was in Medina: thirteen out of twenty three years! So if you deny the Makkan period and say that that was all just strategies until he got into power, then at that point you stop forgiving and you stop overlooking. We seek refuge in Allah from misunderstanding who the Messenger of our Allah was. *Kana ah-lam al-nas* – the prophet (s.a.w.s.) was the most forbearing of people. And this is what we have to return to our community because we’ve

created a culture now in which people can't see any other way out than this reactionary mode. We've been spinning our wheels for far too long, and the Muslims really need to think at a deeper level.

Hikma - wisdom, wherever it is, wherever you find it, you should follow it. Einstein said that the definition of madness is to do the same thing over and over again and expect different results. The Muslims, really, we have to ask ourselves what we're doing about our strategy, about our attitudes and behaviours.

Then finally, about Denmark, because you are having your demonstration tomorrow, I find it really odd that the very thing that we are accusing so many people in the West of doing towards Muslims is that which Westerners blame all Muslims for: the actions of a handful of people. This is the same thing that Muslims end up doing. I mean whoever did these cartoons was a fool, and unfortunately there was some malevolent intent there. I don't have any doubt because it wasn't like an artist who drew some pictures and then there was an editorial decision whether they print them or not. It was actually somebody who wanted to find somebody to do this.

But part of this, unfortunately - and we have to be honest - is that the Muslim community of Denmark has failed to be an upright community. Some of the really serious social problems with Muslims in Europe are occurring in Denmark. You can study the situation there because there are plenty of statistics that have been done on this. This is what we have to ask ourselves as a community: "Have we been honouring our prophet?" In other words, "Has there been anything in our behaviour in these lands that has lead to people having a bad opinion of who our Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is to us? We have to ask because we are ambassadors of the messenger of Allah. We are his ambassadors and people are going to judge him based on our actions. You cannot honour your Prophet by dishonouring his sunnah. You cannot honour your Prophet by dishonoring his sunnah. If you want to honour the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), if you really want to honour him, then practice his character, practice his moral probity, practice his excellence and his virtue towards people. Practice his forgiveness; practice his ability to smile despite all of the incredible difficulties.

This is an age, unfortunately, of brawling. We're dealing with people now, we've gone down into the ghetto, and we're just swinging it out. This is not an age of discussion; this is not an age of discourse. This is something the poet Yeats said in a poem that he wrote in the earlier part of the last century. He said, "Come let us mock at the great, That had such burdens on the mind, And toiled so hard and late, To leave some monument behind, Nor thought of the levelling wind." And then he goes on, "Come let us mock at the wise,... Come let us mock at the good,..." and finally, "...Mock mockers after that, That would not lift a hand maybe, To help good, wise, or great, To bar that foul wind out, for we, Traffic in mockery." And this is the age that we are living in. It's not an age of virtue; it's not an age that respects the other. This includes the Muslim and the non-Muslim alike.

Islam is a high religion and it calls to the highest human ideals. We as Muslims have to live up to that. If we want to have the moral high ground where the sacred is honoured than we have to honour the sacred in ourselves and in others. But if we lose that moral high ground, then we sound like hollow men. When we have anti-Semitism in our newspapers all over the Arab world, what moral high ground do we have to talk about what's put in cartoons, and what's not put in cartoons? We have to be people of truth in order to call others to the truth.

The Qur'an says to the people of the book, "*Laystum 'ala shay hata tuqimatu taratu wa al-injil*" – You have nothing until you apply your Tawrah and your Gospel. Well the *mafhum al-awla*, the a priori understanding of that verse, is that you have nothing until you apply your Qur'an. Muslims, we have nothing until we apply our Qur'an. *Wa Qulu lil-naasi husna*.

We condemn this, and we recognize the double standards in the West. When you have people now that are being prosecuted in England for holding up a sign that says, "Cut off the heads of anybody that criticizes the prophet Muhammad," I mean, that person is not going to go and cut off anybody's head. They are just expressing themselves, and it's more silliness, but if you are going to prosecute him for inciting to hatred, but then attacking the messenger of God? That's something that 1.3 billion people hold sacred, and that's not inciting to hatred? So there are double standards here, we recognize those double standards, and I'm opposed to those double standards, but I also recognize the fact that we as Muslims will not have a strong moral voice until we ourselves are applying our truths. We have to do it ourselves, and Denmark is a nation of good people. This stupidity of demonizing an entire nation because of the actions of one or two fools in that nation. That is as silly as condemning the Saudi Arabians for the actions of a handful of Saudi Arabians and their criminal activities. The Danish defend human rights in the Muslim world. The embassies that were in Egypt, the Danish embassy actually, is involved in monitoring human rights transgressions in prisons in Egypt. I mean, this is the work that the

Danish have been doing. And trampling on their flag is absolutely unacceptable. First of all the flag has a religious symbol on it, which is the cross. And second of all, Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* says “*La tasub allazina yada'una min dun illah, fa yasub Allah 'ajwan bi ghair 'ilm.*” Do not curse the idols of other people because they will curse God. So there are people that will take the Saudi Arabian flag that has “*la illaha illa Allah; Muhammad al-Rasul Allah*” and stomp on it as a retaliation. The prophet said, “Let not one of you curse his parents” and they said to him “How do we curse our parents?” It is done by cursing their parents and they in turn curse your parents. These are the types of things that, as a community, we have to break down. I really believe the onus is on us. We have to tell them who our Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is. Whoever that caricature was, I don't recognize him because that's not my Prophet. That's some poor man's projection in his own self, of complete misunderstanding. And I reject that, and I reject any insult or denigration. Our Prophet (s.a.w.s.), we honour him and we love him, but we should honour him and love him by living up to his words, by living up to his religion, and then by telling people about him. Tell who he was, not just in our words, but in our actions.

Jazakum Allahu Khair.

Wa Assalamu Alaikum.

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/Between-Ignorance-and-Extremism#sthash.V1JkHL6R.dpuf>

Transcript for Be Peacemakers - Eid 2010

Transcript Details

Event Name: Be Peacemakers - Eid 2010

Transcript Author: muslimness.com

Description: Eid Sermon

Date Transcribed: 9/1/2010 12:00:00 AM

Original URL: <http://www.muslimness.com/2010/09/be-peacemakers-eid-2010-sermon-by.html>

Transcript Text

"Be Peacemakers", Eid 2010 Sermon by Shaykh Hamza Yusuf (Zaytuna)

Brief Transcript:

- Noting happens except what Allah (swt) commands. He controls and provides for everything. *Imaan* increases when you increase your devotion in *ibadah*. This is why in Ramadan we found we were able to get up early, read Qur'an several times, everybody tasted the Qur'an.
- Allah (swt) is '*Rabbu Ramadan*' but He is also '*Rabbu Shawwal*'. Just because Ramadan ends, nothing changes in your state. Allah does not change. Maintain your Ramadan practice. Stay in the momentum.
- Reading as much as you are able daily: 100 verses, 50 verses, or just Ayatul Kursi or Suratul Mulk (30 verses) each day, this will protect you from heedlessness, in your grave. The Prophet ﷺ said: 'I wish the 30 verses were in the heart of every Muslim'.

Sermon:

1. Muslims are under seige. You can feel it. But who did this? Allah did this! We as a community have been sitting on Islam for so long, and not doing anything about it. The Muslims are getting along as if nothing matter. Finally you can openly practise Islam without getting burned for the FIRST time in history, in a Christian country.
2. In Surat an-Nahl Allah (swt) says CALL OTHERS TO THE WAY OF YOUR LORD WITH WISDOM. Allah (swt) knows what the people are doing, you don't need to worry, you just tell them about Islam.
3. Emulate the character of the Prophet ﷺ; do not argue, do not curse, **do** defend yourself, but be patient for that is better. Dialogue with the people, '*ahsan*' - in the most beautiful way, do not argue. You'll hear many obnoxious things from the people, but don't be oppressed or constricted about their plots. Speak to people in the best way. Allah (swt) is with the people of piety - *Fasbirr! You be patient!*
4. This is a time when Muslims have to rise above their egos and images of self worth - placed higher than Allah sometimes.. It can't be where they say '*lets burn the Qur'an*' so we say '*lets*

burn the US flag'. Mockery is not acceptable. For some, the US flag is sacred. Allah (swt) said 'Do not curse their idols because then they will curse Allah, out of ignorance... And Like that, we have made every the actions of every *ummah* - beautiful'.

5. We are letting other people tell us who we are, we are letting others define us. No! We know that Americans are generally patient people, we've been living here for generation. But we are living in an environment where the seeds of hate have grown deep from propaganda and media. Each group of people think they are doing something good, so understand their mindset. We must correct and protect our homes, our *masajid*.
6. Benjamin Franklin built a house for free speech for all; Thomas Jefferson endorsed freedom and protection for all including the 'Mohammedans'. Allah (swt) says, 'BUT SAY THE TRUTH FROM YOUR LORD' - whoever disbelieves, let them, whoever believes, let them. If Allah (swt) wanted, wouldn't everyone on earth be believers? Do you think you can force people to convert? That is not our job. You can't convert the world. But you can tell people about Allah (swt) in good conduct and wise words.
7. Shakespeare said 'Theres a tide in the affairs of men'. We have an opportunity to tell others about Islam. We have the tools, so we have to be creative. If you can't do it yourself, empower others who can. This is not to proselytize others, it is to teach.
8. All the Prophet ﷺ asked the Qureysh was to talk to his people, he loved to guide people. He praised the Jews and Christians and Pagans when they did praiseworthy things!
9. Roosevelt said, "it's not patriotic to agree with the president when he's wrong" - this is descent. We can and must speak out against wrong. A problem in the US is the '*extreme* right with a hidden agenda' (war). Now the agenda is 'blame it on the Muslims'. Every time they will stoke the fire of war, Allah (swt) will put it out.
10. We should be peacemakers. We have a destiny but we are squandering our power and wealth. Future communities will curse us! Looking at how much we have and wasted.

Allahu Akbar walhamdulillah. Be pious people, be good people, don't cheat the system, be exemplars, we are here to stay, use your wealth for good. Life is short, we are growing old before our eyes, we need to work now to protect our children. Don't ignore the winds that are blowing. It is Allah (swt) that is waking us up and we'll have no-one to blame but ourselves. Empower yourself and one another.

May Allah (swt) accept your Ramadan and fasting, may He protect your home, your women, make your land safe. May Allah bring these leaders to an understanding so they leave people alone. May Allah give those in authority wisdom, may Allah make us people of the Qur'an, may He forgive all of our sins, restore peace and order, and make us leaders in our community. May He protect the people and make us callers to peace. In the end, this world is a place of turmoil, may Allah (swt) make us people of the peace in the *akhirah*.

Return wrongs with rights.

Eid

Mubarak.

Shaykh Hamza Yusuf.

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/Be-Peacemakers-Eid-2010#sthash.HvA1gf9D.dpuf>

Transcript for BBC: The Prophet's Birthday

Transcript Details

Event Name: BBC: The Prophet's Birthday

Transcript Author: BBC

Description:

Date Transcribed: 3/7/2005 12:00:00 AM

Original URL: http://qa.sunnipath.com/issue_view.asp?HD=1&ID=2872&CATE=120

Transcript Text

Twenty-six years ago I became a Muslim largely because I fell in love with a beautiful human being. "I was only sent to perfect noble character," said the man declared as a "mercy to all the worlds."

As time passed, this love grew as my knowledge of him increased. I painfully watched his religion hijacked by some for their own ends distorting his message and forgetting that he was indeed a mercy to all the worlds. I am troubled by the media's portrayal of him sometimes in the worst of lights. How could the man I came to know and love be so vilified and maligned by those who claim to represent him and also by those who aim to be unbiased interpreters?

Muhammad, peace be upon him, was a shy, reticent man who lived among his people with such high moral character they called him al-Amîn—the Trustworthy.

The Prophet of Islam was born in the city of Mecca, Arabia, into a poor but noble branch of an aristocratic clan known as Quraysh, a people who despised treachery, lies and stupidity, while honouring bravery in battle, generosity in partying, and cleverness in poetry.

Some families, were so ashamed of their baby girls, that they would bury them alive instead of suffering the possible indignity of future dishonour. The religion of the Arabs at the time was a hodge-podge of superstition, divination and idolatry. To them, man's life ended with his death and his afterlife was based on his military exploits might be immortalized by a poets tongue.

The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, was born into this world on April 9th, 570, Christian era in the lunar month of Rabi'a al-Awwal. His father, Abdallah died during his mother's pregnancy. And for the first four years he was raised in the relative purity of the desert by a Bedouin woman named Halimah. After which he returned to his mother, Aminah. But in his seventh year, his mother died leaving him in the care of his grandfather.

At the age of twenty-five, he was employed as a commercial agent by Lady Khadijah, a successful widow from his own clan. She soon recognized his honesty and good nature and proposed marriage. Although fifteen years younger than she was, he accepted her proposal, and fathered six of his seven children with her.

At the age of forty, it had become his custom to escape the idolatry of Meccan society by seeking solitude in a cave on the mountain known as "the Mountain of Light." In the solitary confines of his small cave a voice pierced his consciousness declaring: "Recite!"

Alarmed and shivering he fled to his wife, begging her to wrap him in a cloak. He feared for his sanity, concerned that a desert spirit or poetic muse might be pursuing him. More revelations soon followed and Muhammad came to the understanding that he was not only a prophet in a long line of prophets, but that he was the last of them who was sent with a universal message.

As the days passed his revelations increased and they were powerfully rhythmic punctuated with intoxicating messages that challenged listeners to reflect on everyday miracles such as the alternation of the night and day

These revelations revealed to Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, came to be known as the Qur'an, the Muslim holy book. For thirteen years he invited his clan to worship one God, sit with slaves in spiritual solidarity, respect women as soul-full equals and the source of human mercy, care for the widow, the orphan, the weak and the oppressed.

At first people ridiculed his message and accused him of attempting "to make the gods one." His message threatened his people's financial control of the markets of Mecca where pilgrims from all over Arabia came to spend their wealth.

When his clan failed to stop his preaching they plotted to kill him in his sleep. But he was warned by the Angel Gabriel and told to flee in the cover of darkness to Madina with his beloved friend and lifelong companion Abu Bakr.

Setting out, the two sought refuge in a cave to escape the skilled trackers of Mecca hot on their trail. The bounty hunters quickly came upon the cave, but a spider's web had already covered the entrance and a dove with her young rested in a nest above it.

When the posse left and the two felt safe again, they continued their journey to the city of Yathrib. And as they entered it the young girls and children of Bani Najjar came out chanting lines of poetry which is still sung all over the world in remembrance of this auspicious occasion.

The name Yathrib was changed to Medina, city of hope. It became a city founded on the brotherhood of virtue. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, enacted a treaty uniting the once warring groups. He secured the rights of the Jewish minority by granting them full citizenship and freedom to practice their religion without constraint.

Days after his arrival in Medina he began the construction of a mosque, a sanctuary of prayer and meditation, in the centre of the city. And he had his companions; the Muslims create their own marketplace in order to ensure economic strength.

The Meccans, sensing that a rising power was now emerging in the peninsula, plotted ways of subverting the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and his growing community of believers.

And the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, who had practiced a strict pacifism in Mecca for thirteen years and disliked the use of coercive force, was now given permission by God to defend against any attacks by his enemies. The Qur'an declared, "Fighting has been prescribed for you and you detest it, but perhaps you detest something and in it is much good. And perhaps you love something and in it is much harm, and God knows and you do not know." [Qur'an 2:216].

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Never desire to meet your enemies, rather

ask God for peace and well-being; but should you be forced to meet them, then act courageously.” [Sahih al-Bukhari]

Muslims are not ashamed of their Prophet’s teaching about war. On the contrary, for us it is a great source of pride. He was courageous as a great lion against the strong and oppressive yet gentle as a shepherd with the weak and the oppressed.

The true object of war fought for God should always be peace. What the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, taught is that Muslims fight for a just cause only. In this world, there are only two choices: two sides, truth and justice or falsehood and oppression. You don’t have to be a Muslim to understand that.

After years of conflict between members of his clan and his followers, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, had a revelation that he should visit the sacred mosque. In the eighth year after his migration to Medina the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, set out for Mecca but his adversaries refused to allow him in. They sent out an arbitrator to strike an agreement that would bring the stand-off to an end. And on every point of this treaty the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, compromised his own position in pursuit of peace.

On the journey back to Medina some of the companions were deeply troubled by what had just taken place and disappointed that they were thwarted from visiting the sanctuary. When asked to explain, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, replied, “Did I say it was going to be this year?”

And so the following year, in accordance with the treaty, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and his followers performed a pilgrimage completely unmolested. But soon his clan the Quraysh broke their end of the deal, massacring another clan with alliance to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, attacking them even in the sacred precinct. Abu Sufyan, the head of the Prophet’s enemies, attempted to restore the truce but it was too late. News of the massacre enraged the believers and the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, summoned all of the Muslims capable of bearing arms to march on Mecca. When the nearly ten thousand Muslims arrived on the outskirts of the city, the Quraysh realized they did not stand a chance and people either fled or stayed in their homes.

And so it was, after years of persecution, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, marched triumphant into the city of his birth at the head of the largest army ever assembled in Arabian history. With his head bowed in humility he declared a general amnesty and granted war criminals refuge.

His overwhelming magnanimity of character led to a mass conversion among the citizens of Mecca. Even Abu Sufyan, his archenemy, embraced the religion of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. In the months that followed, almost all of Arabia dispatched representatives to swear allegiance to this Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and to enter in the faith of Islam. In a period of twenty-three years Muhammad, peace be upon him, had succeeded in uniting a feuding people trapped in cycles of violence into one people with a sense of destiny and a mission that would transform the world.

He elevated the low, and he lowered the elevated that they might meet in that middle place known as brotherhood. He infused in them a love of learning unleashing a creative power that would lead to some of the most extraordinary scientific breakthroughs in human history.

He died on the same day he was born, in the same house he had lived in for ten years in Medina, on a small bed made of leather stuffed with palm fibres, in the arms of his beloved wife Aishah. His dying words were, “Treat your women well, and do not oppress your servants, the prayer, the prayer, don’t be neglectful of the prayer. O God, my highest companion, O highest companion.”

But the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was more than just a great historical person, he was a father and friend, a husband, a companion and above all he was a human being. The Prophet’s unique physical appearance, his high character and willingness to sacrifice for others, are often at the essence of any description of him. He was once described by a contemporary in the following words:

“The Messenger of God was imposing and majestic. His face was luminous like a full moon. He was taller than medium but not excessive in height. He had wavy hair, which he parted and it never went beyond his shoulders. He was light-skinned with a high brow. He had full eyebrows and a small space between them. He had a fine, aquiline nose. His beard was full, his eyes black. His physique was supple and lithe, with a full chest and broad shoulders. When he walked, he was determined and his pace was as if he was walking down hill.

When he spoke he was always brief and reflective. He spoke when he saw benefit and spent long periods in silent contemplation. His speech was comprehensive being neither wordy nor laconic. He had a mild temperament and was never harsh nor cruel, coarse nor rude. He expressed gratitude for everything given to him no matter how insignificant. When he spoke, his companions lowered their heads as if birds were perched upon them. When he was silent, they felt free to speak. He never criticized food or praised it excessively. He never swore, nor did he find fault in people. He did not flatter people but praised them when appropriate.

People entered his gatherings as seekers and left enlightened. He would ask about his companions when they were absent often making inquiries about people's needs. He never stood nor sat without mentioning the name of God. He never reserved a special place for himself in a gathering and sat where space provided. He gave each of those who sat with him such full attention that everyone felt that he was the most important person in that gathering. Voices were never raised in his presence. The aged were respected for their age and the young were shown compassion for their youth."

The Qur'an reminds Muslims that when they are slandered by those who reject them they should bear it patiently and be forgiving. I yearn for a deeper understanding of this man, his gentleness towards children, his love of animals, his concern for the weak and oppressed, his sense of justice tempered always with mercy.

I personally love his humour and his sense of tomfoolery. He said once, "I joke but always tell the truth." His wife Aishah said, "he was always making us laugh in the house." One of his names is ad-dahhak—the smiling one. His humour and cheerfulness even in the face of the most difficult of times is so needed today in our troubled world. I imagine him telling those of us who don't laugh enough to lighten up, to show more gratitude even in what appears to be difficulties. And as for those who laugh too much and do so inappropriately, I imagine that he would ask that they reflect deeper on the condition of humanity and nurture compassion in their hearts.

"Those who sin while laughing enter hell crying," he once said.

Once an old woman asked him if she would enter paradise and he replied, "Old people don't go to heaven!" The woman was crestfallen with the answer he had provided, to which he added with a smile, "You shall enter paradise in the prime of your youth."

The Arabs believed dates made eye infections worse. His companion Suhayb was eating dates one day while his left eye was infected. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “Suhayb do you eat dates and your eye is infected?” To which Suhayb said, “I am eating with my right eye only O Messenger of God.” To which the Prophet, peace be and blessings be upon him, laughed heartily.

And once a gruff desert Bedouin came into the mosque and prayed out loud saying, “O God forgive me and Muhammad and don’t forgive anyone else.” Hearing this the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, laughed and said to him, “You are limiting the vast mercy of God.”

I feel so incredibly grateful and blessed to have come to know him and to learn from him. A day of my life has not gone by that I haven’t felt indebted to him for the wisdom he has given me in making sense of my life and my world.

Every day my love for Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, increases. Like the vast majority of my fellow believers across the world and through times he is, indeed, the Beloved—the Praised One.

To the solace of his name, simply saying Muhammad, has an incredibly soothing effect on me.

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/BBC-The-Prophets-Birthday#sthash.KT79Uf7L.dpuf>

Transcript for Alchemy of Happiness

Transcript Details

Event Name: Alchemy of Happiness

Transcript Author:

Description:

Date Transcribed: 1/1/2006 12:00:00 AM

Original URL:

Transcript Text

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

Imam al-Ghazali radiallahu anhu, his name is Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Tusi. He had the laqab which is a name that is given usually people are given a laqab like Sayyidina Hamza was called Asadullah and then the kunya is Abu Hamid but his laqab was Zaynudeen, the beauty of the deen. He was born in Tus in Khorasan in 450 after hijrah which is about 1058. He was born into a very poor family not extremely poor but poor. His father was a weaver and when he died they were very young and he put them in charge of a local shaykh there who was probably, he was not an alim by any means but he was a very righteous man and he had some knowledge. He educated them in their early education but Imam al-Ghazali both of them Ahmad al-Ghazali who is his brother became a faqih and also a poet and is noted for his spirituality as well but Imam al-Ghazali very early on showed his brilliance and they both entered into the madrassah. That is everything their father left, he left towards their education. He asked this shaykh to give them their education and he ended up becoming a student. He went to one of the nearby cities and studied and during that time one of the greatest shaykhs of Islam happened to be in the area and that is one of the things you note in Islamic history. In fact it is really noted in human history.

You will find very often that very brilliant people, they emerge at a time where there are other brilliant people to nurture their brilliance which is very helpful. Imam al Ghazali was very

fortunate and so was Imam al-Juwayni to have a student like Imam al-Ghazali because one of the blessings of a great teacher is to have great students and Imam al-Ghazali became the student of probably the greatest teacher at the time who was Imam al-Juwayni who was called Imam al-Haramayn. He was a brilliant Shafi faqih. His book in usool is a very important book in usool and Imam al-Ghazali would go on to actually develop usool and write his own book in usool that surpassed his teachers book. Imam al-Juwayni was also a great theologian but Imam al-Ghazali, his genius emerges in fiqh early on, usool fiqh and also in ilm al-kalam. These were the two areas that he was really a master of and during that time there was a lot of trouble in the Muslim world for a lot of different reasons partly because the period he was living in was a period in which the creed of Islam was going through some transitions. First of all the Mutazila were still very powerful and the Mutazilite were rationalists and they were people that believed that the aql the intellect should actually be the criteria by which you judge matters of religion. So you put the Quran under the microscope of the intellect and the intellect examined the Quran and then the intellect determined how you viewed everything and the opposite if that was the traditionalist path with which the intellect had very little to do with anything and we just took revelation so we took the Quran and the hadith and we understood them at a literal level and we do not use the intellect to interfere with that understanding.

Imam al-Juwayni was probably in the middle of that. Fakr ad-Din ar-Razi a later scholar said that in the verse that Allah says in Surah Nur in ayatul nur when He says “light upon light” he said it was revelation on the intellect that revelation illuminates the intellect so you need both and there should be a balance in the two. You do not want revelation that does not have intellect but you do not want intellect overriding revelation however you can understand revelation by the intellect “oh it must mean this because it certainly cannot mean that” and so he was coming out of that madrassah which placed an immense amount of emphasis on the intellect but not to the degree where the intellect overshadowed the revelation. That is an important aspect of it. Imam al-Juwayni said about Imam al-Ghazali that he was an ocean so his own teacher was aware that he had an ocean. He said he was a copious or vast ocean of knowledge and what is really extraordinary about him I think is despite his brilliance, he was somebody who was incredibly introspective and aware of his internal states which is often very rare in people. You can have the most brilliant person but they are completely oblivious to their inward state and you will see this if you have gone to university. You have professors that are obviously very brilliant but they are not aware of their own internal states. They can be arrogant and be completely unaware of it and he was arrogant. Imam al-Ghazali was somebody who was, he belittled people, his genius was such that he never lost an argument. If he was in any type of debate he floored his opponents and he became very big headed and aware of his brilliance and aware of his superiority over other people. He was extraordinary eloquent in both Arabic and Persian and so when he gave talks people were just in awe of his ability to speak and what happened he was in his thirties at a very

young age, he was only about 34, he became the head professor at the most prestigious university in all of Islam which was Nizamiyya in Baghdad so in academic, 34, you are just finishing your PhD by 34 so that is like a young whipper snapper. He is being put in charge of and at his lessons hundred of ulema attended. The students did not even get into the lectures because it was all ulema.

So you can imagine the situation that he was in. It was the ulema that were attending his lectures, it was not the students because a lot of them could not understand what he was talking about. The thing about Imam al-Ghazali and it is really unusual. Every discipline that he learned he would write a book in it and that book would become the definitive book of that discipline. In every single subject he became the authority of that subject during his time and just to give you an example he wrote a book *Maqasid al-falasifah* (aims or ends of the philosophers). He learned philosophy in two years he said in his autobiography in his spare time. When he says he learned philosophy that meant that he learned what philosophy was at that time in other words he knew the subject of philosophy because at that time philosophy was limited. Now you have a lot of different philosophers. At that time you only had certain philosophers and you could actually learn all of the philosophies. He mastered Plato, Aristotle, Ibn Sina, Al-Farabi in his spare time. He says he read it when he had free time and then he wrote a book called *Maqasid al-falasifah* and the book was like a best seller because he explained the philosophers better than they could explain themselves and some of the ulema actually criticised him for making philosophy much more accessible than it had been before because it was like philosophy for dummies. He made it so clear that everybody could understand it and people suddenly thought ‘oh he is a philosopher, he was joined the ranks of Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina’ who were not considered to be within the Sunni matrix at that time. So he wrote this book but he followed the book up with a book called *Tahafut al-falasifa* (Incoherence of philosophers) and the reason he did that because he wanted first to make sure that everybody knew philosophy and then he wanted to deconstruct philosophy so he put a book out to let everybody know so all the philosophers read it and they said Abu Hamid he is quite a philosopher and then he wrote a book to say here is what is wrong with philosophy so he showed them. People do not realise the service he did for Islam because philosophy was threatening Islam and that is why he did it. He says that he did not find anybody else among the ulema that was doing that and he felt an obligation to do that so he did that. He wrote a book called *Tahafut al-falasifa* and he also did a great favour because he went through philosophy, he defined six branches of philosophy. He said out of six branches, five branches are actually fine, they are not really a problem. Politics is not a problem, that is an Islamic science. Ethics is not a problem, that is an Islamic science. Mathematics is not a problem, that is an Islamic science. He said these are all fine but when we get into metaphysics, we have a problem and then he identified 20 problems with metaphysics in philosophy and from those 20 problems, he identified three problems in particular and he wrote that in his *Tahafut al-falasifa* that the

philosophers are a problem because they believe in the eternity of the world. They do not believe that the bodies are resurrected and they do not believe that Allah knows particulars. They believe He knows universals. So he refuted why and he did it using logic because that is also one of the branches of philosophy. He said not only was logic a problem, he said it was actually a fard khifayah which was quite radical at the time as well and that Ibn Taymiyyah took case of Abu Hamid al-Ghazali because Ibn Taymiyyah said that logic should not be used in a kalam, theology, and he actually makes a brilliant case for it and the problems with logic that nobody had identified earlier than Ibn Taymiyyah so actually Ibn Taymiyyah's contribution to the attack of logic is really important too. Ibn Taymiyyah noted that one of the problems with logic is that there are presuppositions in logic that are never challenged. Nobody really noticed that. You have to believe certain things within the framework of logic because to do what he was saying the first principles of logic are not really being questioned and that is a problem because they can be questioned and that is a very modern idea.

Imam al-Ghazali said logic was fine. It was basically just a method for reasoning. It was a heuristic tool that somebody could learn and then use in their reasoning and he said he felt it should be fard khifayah because if people do not know how to reason they are susceptible to flaws in their reasoning and also the sophisticated reasoning which is logically flawed reasoning is very common and if you do not learn the problems that go with reasoning, you can fall into them very easily like the common flaw that is used in people's arguments is what they called an ad hominem attack for instance where you are not really attacking the argument, you are attacking the arguer so people will reject what somebody says because of who it is and there are many others that he felt people should learn. Then he wrote a book on logic which became a very popular book also. So he wrote this Tahafut al-falasifa and some people say that philosophy, he struck philosophy a blow in the Muslim world that it never recovered from. That has been an argument. Some people say that Imam al-Ghazali, it is actually problematical that he did because philosophy was something that was beneficial and about 100 years later one of the great Andalusian scholars Ibn Rushd the grandson of the grandfather Ibn Rushd ibn Quartaba wrote a book Tahafut al-Tahafut (the incoherence of the incoherence) which was a refutation of Imam al-Ghazali's book and that book was taken up oddly enough in the West so that became a major major intellectual landmark in the West. The West did not take Tahafut al-falasifa. They took Incoherence of the Incoherence so the West chose to go the way of Ibn Rushd and not the way of Imam al-Ghazali. The Muslim world chose to go the way of Imam al-Ghazali and not the way of Ibn Rushd. Now one could argue and many modern Muslims have argued is that Imam al-Ghazali is actually at the root of the backwardness and the problems that are wrong with the Muslim world. This is a modern argument that you will actually find in books and amongst certain groups of thinkers of the Muslim world particularly in the late 19th early 20th century. There was a real attack of Imam al-Ghazali. Now you have to understand the importance of that

attack because Imam al-Ghazali was called Hujjat al Islam, the proof of Islam. Imam al-Ghazali is to Islam what St Thomas Aquinas was to Catholicism. He really laid the foundations for the Islamic religion during his time and those foundations carried the religion for the next several centuries really almost a thousand years so there are Muslims that argued that.

Now if you look at it at a deeper level you have to become aware of the fact that the West have lost their religion. The path and the course that they chose to take destroyed their faith. Europe is a faithless civilisation now really now America is not a philosophical country. America has never engaged in serious philosophy. The only philosophical tradition in America is pragmatism. Europe was engaged in philosophy at a very deep level. America it is a very pragmatic country and it has had a very interesting relationship with faith. It is kind of a love-hate relationship but it has had an interesting relationship with faith but Europe's faith the underpinnings of it were beginning to erode in the 17th century and 18th century. By the 19th century at the intellectual level there was serious erosion. The 20th century with two world wars pretty much wipes out the faith of Europe. That is what happens.

Now one of the real interesting aspects of the modern world is the faith of the Muslims. This is something that if you look at the modern world the faith of the Muslims is an anomalous aspect to the modern world and what is interesting about the faith of the Muslims, the faith of the Muslims is still very strong amongst even the intelligentsia although we are seeing the erosion of it now which is a very dangerous sign because secularity is becoming very strong in the intellectual classes like if you go to South Asia you go to Pakistan, you meet with the intellectuals, the people that are at that very high level you will often find that they are opposed to religion. The same would be true in the Arab world. You will find that a lot of the intelligentsia the people that study thought, philosophy and things like that, you will find that. So that is becoming the case but it was not the case.

So Imam al-Ghazali he dealt this blow to philosophy. Now the second thing that he did which was extremely important is Imam al-Ghazali took the esoteric element to religion and if you look at any religious tradition you will find very often that a split occurs early on between exoteric religion and esoteric religion. Exoteric religion is the formal aspect of the religion in the outward, it is the body of the religion and so you for instance of Judaism the exoteric aspect of Judaism is the 613 laws that they have to follow to be a Jew. So you learn these laws and they become often ritualised and people tend to forget what they were originally there for and begin to really make that outward aspect of the religion the sole aspect of the religion. That is

extoericism. Esotericism is when you focus on the inwards aspects of the religion and forget the outward aspects of the religion. In Islam, probably the most significant example that is Ismailism. The Ismailiyah were probably the most significant example of esotericism where the religion is all secret esoteric meanings and the exoteric religion is for the common people. It is for the people who do not understand what the true religion is that they need those outward forms and during Imam al-Ghazali's time probably the biggest threat to religion after philosophy was esotericism. So not only did he defend Islam from the philosophers, he defended Islam from the Ismailis. That is why they do not like him to this day. The Ismaili batinists do not like Imam al-Ghazali because much of his emphasis was against the batinists. Now one of the aspects of the batinists were the assassins who were very powerful at the time. They were like terrorists, they really did terrorise the rulers. They were assassins, they would live amongst a ruler for ten years, get their secret message then just one day in the court literally stab the ruler. Everybody thought it was a loyal servant but he was actually a spy for the assassins. So he was fighting these and you cannot imagine the courage of the man because it was an incredibly dangerous thing to do at the time so he had immense courage in doing that.

Now what happens to Imam al-Ghazali in his late 30's, he begins to have an internal crises, what some people might call a midlife crisis but he was deeply troubled by his personality and he was troubled by the fact that all the things that he was teaching, he was not really practising and so he was having this crises of being the teachers who was not practising. One of the things that he says in the Ihya is he says the zakat of waaw, the zakat of being a preacher is practising what you preach. That is the zakat of waaw, you cannot tell others. The Quran says "do you command others to righteousness and forget about yourselves?" and he was aware of that, that he was teaching and was not practising. It was really troubling him and his personality was bothering him. He noticed that kibr, the Quran says that avoid the outward sins and the inward sins. Avoid the outward sins and inward sins. So he felt that the formulists what he called the people of the form of the religion. He said that the ulema of his time were people of the form of the religion, they had really turned Islam into a formulist tradition and he said the spirit of Islam was lost and he said that the esoterists on the other hand had removed the form and had this esoteric tradition that did not have the protection of the exoteric tradition.

So he saw this crisis in Islam that the inward and outward were not unified and so that was another challenge that he took up but he realised that that he could not do that if he was not real. If he was not living that thing, he could not do that. He could not tell people that this religion is about purifying the heart and his heart was not pure. He could not do it. So at the age of about 38, at the height of his eminence literally everybody knew about this man, his book of ethics was

the book that had surpassed with all the previous works of ethics, Ibn Miskawayh, Raghaf al Misbahani, many great ethicists but it was his book everybody was reading. His book on logic, his book on aqeedah, his book on usool it is still considered I mean I asked Shaykh Abdullah Bin Bayyah because he is the master of usool, I asked him of all the books on usool which one did he...I asked him if you were on a desert island and you can only have one book of usool, what would it be? He said Al-Muwafaqaa which is Imam Shatibi's book. I said but that does not really have all the books of usool, it does not deal with all the subjects of usool. He said well if I had to have a book that dealt with it all, it would be Al Mustasfi by Imam al-Ghazali.

Imam al-Ghazali, he really is the first person to develop the science of the maqasid. Imam Shatibi took it to another level but it was Imam al-Ghazali who really developed the science of the maqasid, maqasid a shariah. So Imam al-Ghazali at that time he said that internally one day he would say you have to give up all this dunya and you have to turn away and the next day he would say how can you give up, you cannot give up your position and this is just whispering so shaytan would come and say things. It was happening internally he was going back and forth between these two states and then one day he went to class and he could not talk literally. He just looked out which would be incredibly embarrassing for a teacher obviously to come and literally could not talk. So he is looking at hundreds and possibly thousands of people many of them ulema and he cannot talk literally, just imagine that state and he....they take him home the doctors come and he has described all this. The doctors are all looking and scratching their heads. Some say it is this, some say it is that. This humour is over in the other humours. He needs blood-letting, he needs this, he needs that and finally the doctors concluded this is not in his body, it is in his soul and they said we are not psychiatrists, we are physicians so he needs a psychiatrist. At that time, they said ilm a nafs, he needs somebody who knows psychiatry, the knowledge of the self.

Imam al-Ghazali at that point realised that he had to set out on this journey. So he puts his family in a situation where they were taken care of, he had daughters, his only son died. Hamid. His wife was taken care of and he said he was going to go on Hajj and set out. He spends ten years of his life pretty much just travelling in the Muslim world and not telling people who he was and living in a total state of abasement. His livelihood was done by copying books out. He used to copy books and then sell them and he actually became a janitor. He became a janitor at the Ummayyad mosque in Damascus. So he used to sweep the mosque and then he was given a room there. He used the room as a khalwa. Actually nobody knew who he was. They were teaching his books in the mosque and he came upon places where they were teaching his books. He was one

in a madrassah and one of the teachers was saying like the great Shaykh Imam al-Ghazali said, he said he had to leave because he feared the ujib coming into his heart, really amazing person.

For ten years that is what he did. There is actually at one point there was a group of ulema sitting and this man came up and he asked a question. Imam al-Ghazali was literally sleeping nearby and he heard this man ask this question and none of the ulema could answer so Imam al-Ghazali saw this man and he was worried that he was not getting the guidance that he needed. So he went up to the man and he told him the answer to your question is this. The man looked at him and started laughing. He said all those ulema could not answer me and you think I would believe you, you are just a janitor. Somebody from the group called him over and he said what are you going on about? He said that he said the answer to the question was such and such. All these men were amazed at that and he said he had to leave. He left at that point again. He just did not want anybody to know who he was and that was his state so at the age of 48 he goes back partly because he missed his family and he wanted to see his daughters and also because he had accomplished what he set out to do. In that time he wrote the *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*. So he does back and he did not want to go back to teaching and he actually went back to Nisapur. He went back to Tus, his city. He set up a little place and then because the ruler there imposed upon him to teach he started to give the public classes but he basically had just private teaching and during that time he wrote *Ihya' al-Walid* and he wrote a few books during that time.

But one of the scholars at that time who had known him, Al Ghafir al Farsi said that I remembered what an arrogant and pompous person he was and I heard that his character had completely transformed and I did not believe it so I wanted to go see. He said that he went and he watched him and he said initially I thought he was just faking it. That he was just faking the humility. He said as I watched the man I came to realise that he was completely transformed as a person and so *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* wrote the book *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*. In the book what he did was he joined the esoteric and the exoteric aspects of Islam.

He did something that nobody had done before which is he made a book of fiqh like he has *Bab of Tahara*, *Bab ul Zakat*, *Siyam*. He made a book of fiqh into a spiritual treatise. So instead of learning the formulistic rules of fasting, he was also teaching the secrets of fasting, why you are fasting. So he was teaching the *maqasid*, the spiritual *maqasid* of fiqh and nobody had done that. They had done it in separate books but nobody had the idea of putting these two together and saying this is the way you should teach this to people because they have to know why they are doing these things because if they do not know why they are doing them you will turn this

religion into this formalistic meaningless ritual in which people do not know why they are doing these things. They do not know what the purpose it is. So that is what he did and it is really the incredible contribution to the Islamic tradition and for that reason the Ihya was taught all over the Muslim world and really became one of the most important books. Many scholars said that was really the only book after the Quran that people needed. Many many scholars have said that. If you look at the Yemeni tradition, like the way they teach in Tarim, the entire tradition is based on the Ihya literally the entire tradition. Imam al Haddad all of his books are based on the Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din and on the books of Imam al-Ghazali.

So that is his contribution and people really have no idea. I do not think they have any idea of this man's stature in the history of Islam but also that he has this incredible honour of being literally the man who saved Islam. That is who Imam al-Ghazali is. He is the man who saved Islam and even though Islam is Allah's religion, He protects it, He protects it nonetheless through people and that is the man that Allah chose to do that. The reason which is very clear, I think is because of his ikhlas and that is really his focus of his entire work. He is saying if you should do one thing in your life, it is to get ikhlas. That is really the whole point is to be sound in your heart and if you do one thing in your life, you should do that. All of the accolades that go with life, all of the positions that go in life, all the things that people strive after what he is saying is that all of those things are completely irrelevant if you have not worked on your heart. Not only are they relevant they will destroy you and so he was willing to completely give up all of that out of fear of being destroyed because he says very clearly I was afraid of being firewood for the hellfire. He states it very clearly that that was my fear and I was willing to do anything to remove myself from that state and that is what he did. That is why he is who he is and that is why we honour him today. That is why he has this position that he has. That is why Allah elevated him because he abased himself for the sake of Allah and so he is somebody eminently worth studying and he has written no book that is not a masterpiece. Even before he had some criticisms of the books that he wrote before his spiritual period and he only lived 6 years after he came out of his ten year khalwa. He died at the same age as his teacher, Imam Shafi, not his direct teacher but he did not live to be 80 or 90. You could not even imagine what he could have produced. He wrote over 200 books so we could not even imagine what he would have produced had he had a very long life. He had a life filled with barakah.

So he wrote a book and this is the Arabic version of it, he wrote a book called Kimyaye Sa'adat which means the Alchemy of Happiness and he wrote this book, it was in Persian, the initial book and he wrote it for the common people. It is an abridgement of his Ihya but then he wrote a

very small Arabic treatise which he called Kimyaye Sa'adat also called the Alchemy of Happiness about the heart and he begins:

Praise be to the One who elevated the bodies at the purified ones with struggle, He engendered happiness in the hearts of the awliya with witnessing (divine witnessing) and He ornamented the tongues of the believers with remembrance and He cleared the thoughts of the gnostics of the people who know with mediation and protected the majority of His servants from corruption and He constrained the people of zuhd of giving up what was right and upright and He saved the people of taqwa from the oppression of their desires and He purified the spirits of the people of certainty from the oppression of doubtful matters and He accepted the works of righteous people but through the performance of their prayers and He helped the qualities of free people, the virtues of free people by giving them connection to Him. I praise Him, the praise of One who sees the signs of His power and strength and witnessed the witnessing of His uniqueness and His unity and has traversed the path of His secrets and His birr, righteousness, and has picked the fruits of his knowledge from the tree of His glory and generosity. I thank Him the thanking of one who has forged and drunk from the river of his bounty and generosity. I believe in Him the belief of a man someone who believes in his book in everything He has stated, in his prophets, in His pure ones, in His promise, in his threat, in his reward and in his punishment. I testify that there is no God but one true God Allah the unique who has no partner and I testify that Muhammad is His servant and messenger, the One who sent to the children of the wretched and the profligates as One who breaks their back and to the handles or those things that the atheists and the heretics cling to break it and to the transgressor with doubt and shirk who overwhelms them and for those who follow the truth and virtue, He gives victory.

Then he says in the beginning of this book, the chapter on knowledge of the self. Know that the key to the knowledge of Allah is knowledge of yourself. Allah says Glory be to Him, We will show Our signs on the horizon and in themselves until this becomes clear to them that it is true". Whoever knows and the Prophet said, it is generally not considered a hadith, some of the ulema do consider it a hadith, but it is generally not considered a hadith but it is a sound statement "whoever knows himself certainly knows his Lord" and it is said it is a statement of Yahya bin Mu'adz Ar-Razi and Imam Nawawi says it is not thabit, not a confirmed hadith and some of them said it means whoever knows himself if you know that you are finite you know your Lord is infinite. If you know you are created, you know your Lord is uncreated. There are many interpretations of that statement but generally some of the ulema wrote entire books just explaining that statement.

Imam al-Ghazali, if there is one area where he was not considered a master in, it is the science of hadith but I will say by today's standards he would probably be the greatest muhaddith alive so when he says he was not a master of hadith and he says that himself, it does not mean in anyway that he did not know, he knew hadith very well but he was at a time where the collections of hadith had directly been gathered so a lot of people tended to focus on fiqh, usool and kalam. So that was his environment but towards the end of his life he did begin to seriously study ilm a hadith. That is one of the things he was doing in the last portion of his life. So those who criticise his knowledge of hadith are ignorant and another thing that is important to remember, many of the ulema had their own chains, they had studied, they had taken hadith, there are many hadith, that is why Hafith al-Iraqi who did a critical edition of the Ihya and looked at all of the hadith in the Ihya will often say "I didn't find a source for this hadith", they do not say "I didn't find a source for this hadith", they do not say there is no origin for this hadith whereas these people knew that are hadith, we might not know the chain so they would say I did not find a source for this hadith or if they knew it was fabricated, there are hadiths that we know are fabricated, then they would say it is madou. So he does have weak hadiths in his collection but again like many of the scholars have pointed out, he was not doing anything that people did not do at his time. Weak hadiths were used in Fadail Amal. Most of the books of exaltation were filled with weak hadiths. Even the greatest of the ulema have books...even the people accused him having weak hadiths have books with weak hadiths in them like Ibn Jawzi criticised some of his books. In fact Talbis Iblis who a lot of people quote he has some criticisms of Imam al-Ghazali, he got the name of his book from Imam al-Ghazali. Talbis Iblis was, Imam al-Ghazali said I hope to write a book which I am going to entitle Talbis Iblis to show how Iblis has tricked so many of the sufis and people so Ibn al Jawzi wrote the book Talbis Iblis to show how the Sufis had been tricked by Iblis. He got the idea from Imam al-Ghazali but he criticised Imam al-Ghazali in the book. Ibn al Jawzi was a great alim, and he was from the people of wilaya insha'Allah. So the ulema criticised each other and that is just part of what ulema do so I would not take those things seriously. There is a lot of foolish people that read the criticisms of ulema of other ulema. There are a lot of reasons why they criticise each other. Sometimes it is just hasad, flat out, very common and sometimes it is because they think that this is a genuine problem and they could be wrong and sometimes it is because during their time they do have a problem. In Ibn Jawzi, there was a real problem of extremism in Sufism so he wrote his book as a corrective which is why Sidi Ahmed Zarruq says you have to be careful with that book because he wrote it as a corrective and when you write a corrective book you will often go to the other extreme in order to create a corrective so that is important to remember.

So anyway he mentions this hadith and he says there is nothing closer to you than you own self. If you do not know yourself, how are you going to know your Lord? If there is nothing closer to you than yourself, if you do not know yourself, how can you know anything else? So if you say

to me I know myself, I say to you, you know your outward form. You know the hand, the foot, the head, you know the body. You do not know your internal reality. I am talking about that aspect of yourself where if you get angry you want to argue, you do not know, why do you get angry? Or if you become desirous you look for what is going to satisfy your desire or if you get hungry you are suddenly looking for food. That is you get thirsty you go looking for drink. You do not know why you do those things. What is the thirst mechanism? Animals share all those things that I just mentioned. Animals have all these things. If they get hungry, they go eat. If they get thirsty, they go drink. Animals have that so you have the knowledge of the animals.

So it is an obligation upon you to know yourself in reality, the reality of yourself so that you will know who are you. You will know who you are and where you came to arrive at this place and why you were created. Through which things is your felicity and through which thing is your damnation. In you certain qualities have been gathered, their attributes that have been gathered in you, amongst them qualities of ruminants like goats, cows, sheep and in them qualities of predators like lions and tigers and in them qualities of demons and in you have been gathered qualities of angels. The ruh is the reality of your essence, you are not a body. The reality of your essence is your ruh and everything other than that is alienated from you. It is a stranger and it is only borrowed. It is on loan, ariah, it is a loan. So it is absolutely necessary that you know this and to know that each one of these qualities that are there, the ruminants, the predators, the demons and the angels, they have nourishment and they have joy so each one of them has something that nourishes, strengthens them and also makes them happy.

So yesterday we looked at the section, knowledge of the self and why it was important and then he talked about the different types of attributes that are in people. The ruminant attribute, the predatory attribute, the demonic, the angelic and then this section he begins by saying bismillahir rahmaanir raheem if you want to know yourself, know that you are composed of two things. The first is the heart and the second is called the nafs or the ruh and the nafs is the heart that you know through the inward eye so the nafs and the heart are the synonyms for the same thing.

Your reality is the internal reality because the body is the first but the heart is the end, it is the last and the self is the end and it is the first meaning the heart so the body is the beginning of this world, this experience but the heart precedes it and in the end it is the heart that you take with you into the next world so the heart is the first and the last in reality. In the heart is not this lump of flesh that is in your breast inclining towards the left side because this is shared by animals and dead things. And everything that you can see the outward eye is from this world and this world is

called alam al shahadah. So you have alam al ghayb and you have alam al shahadah and Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala says that He created both so everything that you can see he is saying from alam al shahadah the world that is witnessed or experienced. Now that includes things that we can see through machinery I mean you had in the 19th century you had some of these rationalists who attempted to say for instance that the shayateen were microbes and the unseen was really all of this microscopic world and things that we cannot see anymore so there was a trend amongst some of the scholars to try and do that but all of that is part of the mulk. Everything that we can see or even understand through material means so modern physics all of these types of things that enable us to know about subatomic particles all of this mulk which is the dominion here material world.

So he says but the reality of the heart which is consciousness really what he is talking about is consciousness and in the West you have a trend for sometime now that has been trying to prove biochemical foundations of consciousness. They want to prove that consciousness is actually material. This is the idea of mind and matter and part of the reason they want to do that it is because consciousness is a problem. It is a metaphysical problem. I mean I was at a martial art studio where one of my sons was taking a class and I started talking with one of the other parents and he was a biochemist's PhD from Berkeley teaching biochemistry and he asked me what I did. I said I taught religion and ethics. I said I am on the other side of the coin and he said maybe less so than you think and I said what do you mean and he said well consciousness we cannot really explain that can we so he was a biochemist recognising that problem of consciousness. It is a problem in science. Where does our consciousness come from? How do we know anything? Where does infinity come from? Where does this concept come from? Animals do not have that. Why can we even think of something like infinity? Infinity, we do not see it anywhere. We are temporal, in the world but we can come up with concepts like that. That is consciousness. How can we even think about God? Just the idea of being able to contemplate God is an extraordinary thing. One of my favourite quotes is Einstein he said the only incomprehensible thing to me about the universe is its incomprehensibility. That is an amazing statement. The only thing incomprehensible to me about the universe is its incomprehensibility. How are we able to know the universal law of gravity? How is the human consciousness capable of something that extraordinary to understand the universal law of gravity? How do we know about strong and weak nuclear forces? How do we know about nuclear forces? How do we know about electromagnetism? How are those concepts even comprehensible to the human intellect? Because the intellect was designed to know them. That is what you have to conclude, there is a relationship between consciousness and between the objects of consciousness and that relationship is designed so he is talking here about al qalb this organ of consciousness.

So it is not from this world but it is from the unseen world. It is a stranger in this world. It is alienated from the world so consciousness itself is alienated from the world. One of the reasons, one of the Andalusian scholars said, one of the reasons why people have to sleep is because the ruh is not of this world, it is of another world, it is of another world and the ruh cannot take too much materialism. It literally has to go back into the unseen world in order to get rest from the dunya so sleep is a spiritual nourishment for the soul and that is why people that are sleep deprived become really agitated and have really hard times.

So this lump of flesh is the vehicle for consciousness. That is what it is, it is the vehicle for consciousness. And all of the limbs of the body are its soldiers and it is the king. And the knowledge of God and the witnessing of the beautiful presence, this divine presence, these are the attributes of this heart and all of the responsibilities upon the heart if you are not conscious, the qalam the pen has been lifted for the sleeper. If you are in a state of sleep there is no responsibility because there is no consciousness which is why alcohol is prohibited because you lose your consciousness, you lose your ability to think and this Lordly speech that is being articulated to us is to the consciousness. The Quran is speaking to your consciousness. It is not speaking to your body, it is speaking to your heart your ability to perceive. And in accordance with actions are by intention. The place of intention is the heart so all of your reward and punishment is based on what happens in the heart, the whole thing, it is all in the heart.

And felicity and damnation, there is salvation in the akhirah and also damnation, they follow it, they follow the heart and this animal spirit what they used to call the vital force, it is what the Chinese call chi, the vital force is something that is in the body but is not of the body and it is what animates the body. The Arabs call it the living spirit. 20th century medicine really denied that aspect. They don't really put a lot of credence in that but he is saying this vital spirit, or vital force is in everything subservient to it, and with it so you need this.

That is why there is a massive difference between the living and the dead. If you see a dead body, if you see someone you know it is really amazing to see a dead body of somebody who you knew because they have gone and it is very clear that they have gone, what animated the body has gone, the animus, the spirit, the animal so it is the same the animus, the same as the Latin.

So knowledge of its reality and knowledge of its attributes is the key to knowledge of Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala. So you must struggle until you come to know it because it is an inestimable precious essence from the nature the essential nature of the angels because the angels

are light. They do not have the dross of the body. Angels are pure consciousness. They are conscious creatures. They are aware of only their Lord so they have that consciousness and that is what he is saying that this is your essential nature and the source of its origin is from the divine presence. The soul was within the divine presence. We were all there in the divine presence and the pain and the alienation of the dunya is the recollection of that presence. That is why people are in the states they are in because they are alienated. The only people that have itminaan are the people of dhikr, everybody else is a mess.

From that place the consciousness came and from that place it goes back. That is where we came from and that is where we go back to. So he says what is the reality of the heart? As for your question what is the reality of the heart. They ask you about the ruh. Say the ruh is from the command of my Lord, because the ruh is from the collection, the summation of the divine power.

Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala is omnipotent so the ruh is basically the greatest expression of the divine power because obviously you can make life inanimate things is one thing. We can make forms do things with inanimate things, humans can do that but to put life in, people that have the greatest punishment are the form makers because Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala says blow life into it now, put life into it because that is only Allah can do that so that ability to give life is the greatest expression of divine power that He can animate us and give us life and it is also an attribute of Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala. Al-Hayat is an attribute of Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala.

It is the ruh that gives us life. Does He not have the khalq and the amar? The creation and the command. So the command, the ruh is from the command of Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala and the command precedes creation so Allah creates but He creates by the command. When He wants a thing He just commands it to be and it is. So that is the command of Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala. So the human being is from the created world from one aspect but He is from the world of command from another aspect because he has a ruh, so you have a body and a ruh.

Everything that can be measured that has place, that has quality, all of that is from the created world. But the heart does not have a space like that not does it have measurements, consciousness. That is what the scientists know, they do not know how to, they cannot measure it, they do not know how to give it a reality because they are materialists generally. They are working in the world of material so consciousness becomes the great problem because it does not have masaha, it does not have makdar so they cannot place it like they can other things now is it

amenable to allotment. You cannot apportion it, you cannot say oh this part is here, this part is here, you cannot split it up, you cannot dissect it so it is not dissectible.

If you could dissect it then it would be from the created world. It would be from the aspect of ignorance, ignorant and from the aspect of knowledge, knowledgeable. Everything that has knowledge and ignorance it has the same attributes, it is impossible, you cannot join two opposites.

So another meaning here is it is from the world of the command. So the *alam wal amar* is a way of expressing something among created things that does not have *masaha* and *taqdir*. It does not have measurements, you cannot measure it. There is no way to measure it. So some people because of this they thought that the *ruh* was eternal, the philosophers, they thought because they could not measure it, they thought then oh it must be eternal so he is saying this is a mistake to think that. The *ruh* is created but what he is saying is it has a different quality so Allah, He has the creation but He also has the command. The command is different from creation so the created world and the world of the command are different. He is describing the material world and what can be seen and the other is describing the immaterial world and what cannot be seen so they are differentiated, these two qualities.

But he is saying because of that differentiation some people mistakenly thought oh that must mean it is not created. It is eternal with Allah *subhanahu wa-ta'ala* and that was the belief of some of the philosophers. And some of them said oh it is an accident, an accident in logic is something whatever needs something else to exist so for instance you have the flower and then you have the colour. The colour is an accident because the colour exists through the substance so the substance is essential, the colour is accidental. That is what they call it. It does not mean by accident like we use it in the common language. An accident is something that is not essential and so that is what he is saying. Some of them said the *ruh* was non essential, it existed through the body so what was essential was the body. The *ruh* was accidental but that is a mistake because the accident cannot be substantiated by itself. It is not self substantiated. And it always follows something else. The *ruh* is the origin of the children of Adam. It is the origin so it cannot be an accident and the form of the son of Adam is actually subservient, it follows the spirit so how could it be an accident so he is refuting these views about the *ruh* that other people have and some of them said it is material, these are the materialists. I mean he is refuting each one of these different groups in his time. Some said it is a boy, it must be maternal and this is very modern. This is what they are trying to say now they want to substantiate the materiality of

consciousness. The consciousness, it really is just chemical changes and exchanges, that all it is and so you take away that and you do not have consciousnesses anymore which is why from our point of view if you have somebody in a coma you are just assuming they are not conscious, that is an assumption.

If you go to a hospital and there is somebody there you know how people talk to people in a coma and the doctors are kind of scratching their heads, this guy is in a vegetative state, you are just wasting your time, what makes them feel better something like that. Those are all assumptions because there is animation in the body. We are just saying they cannot have consciousness because the material basis for consciousness is no longer there therefore there is no consciousness. We do not believe that, we do not believe that because consciousness is elevated slightly above your body. That is what happens when you die and the people in the grave hear the people's pattering of their footsteps above the grave, we know that it is in the hadith so there is consciousness and people who have had near death experiences or have had those experiences where they separate from the body, people have tried to explain material, it is just this massive release, an endorphin release etc etc. You can do that until the end of time, try to explain away the experience of consciousness but in the end it is a mystery, it is a great mystery the consciousness and that is what he is saying do not try and explain this away. It is an accident, it is a body, it is a material, it is this, it is that because you can dissect the body but where is the ruh, where can you put your scalpel into it so how can you call it a body. So this ruh that we are naming the heart.

And it is the place in which consciousness awareness of God, knowledge of God dwells, is not a material substance, it is not a body, it is not an accident, it is of an angelic nature, it is of an angelic nature. Knowledge of this ruh is extremely difficult because there is nothing in the religion that has come to us that will give us this knowledge. When they asked him about the ruh Allah said say the ruh is from the command of my Lord. That is the extent of the knowledge so he is saying we can have knowledge of its reality but this is what we can know about it. Because the religion is struggle, that is the essence of religion. If you want to understand the religion, the religion is not a metaphysical teaching, the religion is a struggle in the world, that is what the deen is. It is a struggle in the world. It is a sign that you are guided. That is what knowledge is, a sign that you are guided. Those who struggle for Our sake we will guide them to Our pathways. We will guide them to Our pathways. So if you are not expending all of your energy it is not permissible for you to even talk of the reality of the ruh, it is not permissible. If you are not expending all of your energies whoever does not expend all of his energies he says it is not

permissible for him, it is not permissible to speak with him about the knowledge of the reality of the ruh.

And the first foundational phase of struggle of mujahidah is to know the army of the heart, to know what the armies of consciousness are because the human being if he does not know his army he cannot go to war. If you do not know who your soldiers are you cannot fight so he is saying this mujahidah if you do not know who your askar is you are wasting your time.

Why was the heart created? Know that the nafs the ruh the consciousness is the vehicle of the heart so the nafs the self that we have been given it is a vehicle for the heart and the heart has troops. Just as Allah Glorified and Exalted He said and no one knows the soldiers of your Lord save He. So only God knows the number of soldiers that He has.

The heart was created for other worldly labour in order to seek felicity of the next life. That is why the heart was created. That is the purpose of the heart and its felicity is knowledge of its Lord the Exalted and the Majestic and this knowledge of its Lord the Exalted is achieved through the creation itself so the way that you that you know your Lord is through the creation, the way the heart comes to know Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala is through the creation in ourselves. He began it with that. It is through the self.

And then he says and the heart is among the totality of its world. And you cannot know these wondrous aspects of the world except by means of the senses. Your hawas. So the senses are from the heart, they are a part of consciousness. The senses are from the heart and the qalib because the Arabs say al qalb wal qalib. You have the qalb the essence. You have the qalib the body. You have the qalib the body so the body is a vehicle for the senses, for the experience of the senses. So you cannot get this knowledge except also by knowing how to hunt. You have to know how to seek this out and also knowledge of the net that you hunt with. In order to achieve this knowledge of Allah through His creation, through the uses of his senses, you have to understand how to do that and you also have to understand the tools that you have been given to do that. So he says the body which is the vehicle for the senses, the vehicle for this knowledge, it is only substantiated, it is only maintained through food, through drink, through this heart, having calorific content, through the moisture of life and it is extremely weak. It is constantly exposed to hunger to thirst inwardly. It has the danger of water and fire outwardly, it can drown, it can be burnt and then it is constantly facing many enemies.

How do we know then the troops of the heart? You need to know two troops. The outward troop is shahwa and ghadab, it is desire and anger. Those are actually troops, those are therefore the heart. Shahwa and anger what are called concupiscent and the irascible soul and the waystation of these places, the waystation is along the way, the places where they alight, the alighting places the abodes of these are the hand and all of the limbs. So that is the first outward askar, the outward army, the external army is shahwa the desire wal ghadab and anger and the alighting places is in the hand where it manifests in the feet, in the eyes, in the ears and in all of the limbs. As for the external troops their alighting places are in the brain the consciousness so he says and these are the powers of the imagination of reflection, of memory, of recollection and of supposition. So these are all powers you have been given in the heart so you have the external and the internal and these were created for you in order for you to achieve the goal of the heart.

Everyone of these faculties has a specific function so if any of them is weakened then the condition of the son of Adam in the two abodes is weakened, anyone of these. And the totality of those two armies is in the heart and the heart or the consciousness is the amir, it is the commander, so if the heart commands the tongue it speaks to remember, if it commands the tongue to remember it, it remembers so the heart commands the tongue to remember Allah so the tongue says astagfirullah. The command came from the heart. If it commands it to say subhanAllah, it says subhanAllah. If it commands the hand to strike, it strikes, if it commands the foot to move like if you are going to the umrah, it is the heart that commanded the foot to go, it is how you set out. If you get up, it is the heart that commanded you to get up. Anything that you, the command centre is the heart, that is where it is coming from. This is very important because what it is trying to do is lay for you a foundation of understanding not only in the nature of consciousness but the fact that you are going to be responsible for all of your actions because people do not think about this stuff. They go through life on automatic pilot and they are not thinking about the fact that they are not on automatic pilot that they actually have volition. They have animality, they have knowledge, they have all of these attributes that are attributes of the divine, Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala has put divine attributes in the human being and then said you are responsible for these divine attributes. I am giving them to you for a reason not to play, not to eat, not to drink. I have got creatures created to do those things. You do those things also but I have other creatures to do that. I do not need you to copulate, I do not need you to drink, I do not need you to eat, I have got creatures plenty of them to do that. That is their function and yes you share those qualities with them but there is a hikmah, there is a reason. It creates humility, there are a lot of reasons for it. That is the most essential, it keeps you down to earth because they are better than you at it.

So if you want to compete with them they can eat more than you can really a lion can eat more than you can. A rooster can copulate more than you can. All of them can outdo you in these those things. That is not why you were created. So know what your amir is. The amir is the heart and he is going to explain why you have to have that knowledge because the troops mutiny. You have time when the army overthrows the commander in chief, it is called *accudeta* so that happens. The troops get out of control and they take over and then what happens they wreak havoc in the land. You know Ghana they have a coup very couple of weeks but what happens everytime they have a coup there is another, it is a disaster, people get shot, there is all this bloodshed, turmoil, they show pictures of all in chaos, the town is in chaos. That is what happens when the troops rebel and then he says you have been given five senses in order to protect yourself. If there is fire you touch it, ouch that burns. I know not to do that again. Right. You kick the rock. You know Dr Johnson Berkeley said everything is in the mind. Berkeley was an idealist. He said none of this has any reality so Dr Johnson was walking with Boswari, he kicked a rock and said I refute it thus. But that is why you have senses because that hurts. If you kick a rock it hurts and you know not to kick a rock it hurts and you know not to kick a rock again. The purpose of the senses is to preserve the *nafs* in order that you can put away provision for the next life so the soul can also capture the hunt what it is going after and the transaction is completed and gather the seed of other worldly and gather the seed of other worldly felicity. So this is all why you have been given this.

All of these are in obedience to the heart. Just as the angels are in obedience to their Lord, Glorified and Exalted is He and they do not disobey His commands. So these things that you have been given, they are in subservience to you.

Just like the angels do not rebel they are created to be in subservience to Allah *subhanahu wa-ta'ala* these were created to be in subservience to you but there is a difference. So he says, it has been said in a well known proverb, the soul the *nafs*, the self is like a city and the two hands, the two feet, all of the limbs are like the estates, the farms around the city that supply the city and the concupiscent soul, this concupiscent faculty the desire is its governor. And the irascible faculty, anger is its police force. And the heart is its King and the intellect is its minister so he is saying this is a well known way of looking at this, the self is like a city. And the king is managing them in order for his dominion his kingdom to have stability and the conditions to be stable. Because the governor is *shahwa* it is desire, it is a liar it is officious, meddlesome, it is confused, disordered, that is the governor. If you wonder why there are bad governments and you always have these people, it is because it is all for you to understand the nature of yourself. Everything out there is in here. So when your self is disorderly everything out there has to be disorderly. It is

for you to understand the nature of yourself. Everything out there is for you to get self knowledge, for you to understand yourself because in understanding yourself you are going to know your Lord. So if you look out there he is saying the governer is a disaster, he is out of control and he needs to be controlled and then the police force, the irascible soul, he is murderous, devastating, vile, criminal. This is the police, Rodney King. That is what he is saying, they are a disaster. If you let them go out of control, they will go out of control.

So what do you do? If the king leaves them to do whatever they want the city is destroyed. It falls into ruin because they are doing their functions. That is all they know. They know what they are supposed to do but if they are not being controlled, they go out of control because they are not a command centre, they do not have that aql, the police have guidelines, and you have to keep them within the guidelines because they lose it you know if you give a man a gun and he suddenly becomes arrogant. Put a gun on anybody's side and there is a swagger that shows up. They start walking differently. They look at you differently right, you got a problem, because seriously he has got a gun. I told my boys if people would go back to carrying swords and guns you would see an amazing change in the basic courtesies of people out there because part of the problem is they are afraid they will smile and really it is like the police oh officer did I do something wrong? Why are you being nice to him? Because you are afraid. You were just miserable to the person at the cash register. Hurry up, I am in a hurry you know latte no foam right. Where is it? And then they go out that is what people do. They are pathetic. Because they are out of control completely out of control.

So that is what happens in a city, it is all a disaster and that is why when somebody comes in to a city that has authority suddenly everything changes, people's behaviour changes, it happens. People rectify cities. If you get a serious ruler, a governor that knows exactly what to do and has the wisdom to do it things change, people change. Benjamin Franklin said one preacher came into Philadelphia and he said he was within months the effects of the preacher on the character of the people and all of the other preachers became jealous of them so they tried to get prohibited from teaching in the churches because he was so popular so Benjamin Franklin actually, it is in his biography, he built a non denominational centre and he said I built this so anybody who has something good to say to the people of the city can come and say it, even if the Mufti of Constantinople wanted to come and to teach us Islam, he would find a pulpit in my way so he says so the king has to take counsel with the minister. He has to know what is going on when the king is out of touch which is what happens. This is what happened to the Shah of Iran. He was completely out of touch. Kings get out of touch with reality. The Shah was not aware of people being tortured with things with electrodes and things like that. They get out of touch and then everybody is afraid to bother them with the details and then suddenly they are overthrown so the king has a job.

A minister once came to visit Imam al Ghazali and he said your time is all taken to account for, what are you doing visiting me? Go do your job. It is much better than for you to come and visit me because these people have immense responsibility. These people are going to have the biggest hisab on the day of judgment. The people who have authority over other people, people that were responsible for the well being of other people and how they betrayed them. They betrayed their trust. If you have an army, what is an army for? An army is for defence, that is what an army is for. An army is to defend people from threats of aggression. If you use that army to aggress, they are not aggressors. The army are not aggressors, they just follow orders but if you use that army to aggress and kill people doing that, then you are responsible for every single one of those lives that you wasted on the day of judgment. People have no idea of the immensity of it. If they did they would not do it. If they did they would not run for office. It is only a fool that runs for office which is why the Prophet salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam said we do not give this affair to anyone that seeks it. Why? Because the very fact they are seeking it means they do not understand what it is. If they knew what it was they would flee from it so we are not giving to give you that authority. Why? Because you want it which means that is the indication that you do not know what it is, it is an immense responsibility. It is a burden and that is why he said a man who leaves this world and has never been an amir over anyone is successful. People want authority. Everybody wants authority because they do not know what it is. Even a man in a house the responsibility 'everyone is a shepherd and every shepherd is responsible for his flock'. You are going to be asked about every single one of the people you were responsible for. So thinking has to take counsel with the wazir, the aql and he has to put the governor and the police under the authority of the minister so there is hierarchy so the police are not out of control. If he does that then the conditions of the kingdom are stabilised, you have a stable kingdom and the city flourishes and like that the heart must take counsel with the intellect. If you follow your heart without the intellect because if you follow your heart without the intellect. You have to listen to the minister. The king cannot do it on his own because the minister is the one who is in touch with reality. Where does he get his reality from? The minister. Where does the heart get the reality from? The intellect because the intellect is in touch with reality so the intellect, he needs to take counsel with the intellect. Counsel, not be controlled by the intellect, not be dominated by the intellect, not be dominated by the intellect but he needs to take counsel from the intellect. And he has to place the desire and the anger under its authority so these troops have to be under the authority of the intellect. Your ghadab and your desire, the intellect is the minister. The desire, that is the governor and then the anger is the police. So he is using this as a metaphor so you can understand. You can see it is in the big one you can see it in the little one. So the psychological condition is stabilised. People do not lose it so the physiological condition is stabilised. And so you arrive at the means of felicity from knowledge of the divine presence. That is the whole point. But if you place the intellect under the authority of the desire and anger, the soul is destroyed and the heart is wretched in the next life. That is what happens.

Know that the desire and the ghadab the irascible and the concupiscent souls are fetching servants of the nafs. They are fetching servants. They are the ones that got what you need. They protect you in the matters of food, drink, copulation, for the labour of the senses because you need those things in order to be well. And then the soul is the servant of the senses which is the net of intellect. So the senses are the hunting net of the intellect. It is how the intellect knows. It uses the senses as a net that it throws out to catch reality so that it can understand these things so you have sight, sound you have this as a hunting net.

And also the spies that are able to see the creation of Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala, Majestic is His Power and then these five senses are the servant of the intellect. And they are for the heart consciousness a lamp and a candle, the light by which they are able to see the divine presence. They are able to experience it. Because the delight of the senses and this is their portion of the stomach and the genitals. That is what the senses delight in. That is their jannah. The jannah of the senses is food and sex. That is the pinnacle of their delight in this world. These are insignificant in relation to this other delight which is the delight of divine awareness of divine consciousness. And the intellect is the servant of consciousness and the heart was created to see and contemplate the beauty of the divine presence so all of these things are servants for this heart. It is not the other way around but what happens in the world is that people make all of these things commanders and the heart becomes subservient.

So the one who is exerting his energies in this craft that for which he was created, this is a true servant. From the youth of this presence, I only created jinn and ins to worship Me so if you are doing this you are indeed a true servant you are fulfilling what you were created to do. What this means is we created the heart, we gave it a mulk a dominion, we gave it a dominion and troops to protect the dominion and we made the soul its vehicle in order for it to traverse, travel upon this beast of the nafs from this dusty world to the highest of the heights and that is what we have been given.

So if he wanted to fulfil the right of this blessing then he sits like the sultan in the midst of his dominion and he makes this divine presence his Qibla, his direction and his goal and he makes the next life his true nation, birth place, his final abode and his nafs is his riding beast and the world is his waystation. It is only a temporary alighting place and his two hands and two feet are his servants and his intellect is his minister and his desire is his labourer. It is doing the labour and his wrath is his police force and his senses are his spies that he keeps in touch with his dominion and everyone of them is entrusted with a world or a domain, amongst these domains in

order for him to understand the conditions of the domain so each one of these is there so he can know what is the condition or the state, what is going on.

And the ability the faculty of imagination is in the forefront of his intellect like a chief. It is able to gather the information of the jawasis. So what he is saying is your neocortex is in the front, the incredible ability that is unique in the human being, animals do not share this quality the ability for us to perceive, this ability of perception he is saying that this is like a chief and it takes in the news of the jawasis, the spies bring the news and tell them. The spies are the senses, it comes into the intellect, it tells them what is going on and then he says and then the memory is in the middle of the brain. This is like the map master. It is the one who knows the terrain and gathers all of the.....he is listening, he is there next to the chief and he is gathering all the information and keeping it. He brings the map, this is happening over there, groups are massing over here so he brings that and he is maintaining all of this and when the intellect needs it, he is there to bring the information, that is the purpose of the memory. So if they bring the news to the minister, the aql, he is able to know the condition of his dominion in other words he can assess reality, in reality, so what he is saying is basically that this is an incredibly orderly system that we have been given and if it is used properly you will be in touch with reality and you will be fulfilling your purpose but just like out there things go very wrong.

They are going to be greeting you with flowers when you come in, when the army comes in, they are going to throw their flowers at you, the jawasis were not doing their job. Intelligence was not doing its job. They have weapons of mass destruction. Intelligence was not doing its job. They have weapons of mass destruction. Intelligence was not doing its job so now reality is distorted and what happens? Disaster. That is what happens disaster because they are out of touch with reality and then you have the shahwa is down there 'we can make some money here because my salary is not enough so you know what I know the minister, I can get a contract with you'. The police force needs new guns. It does not need new guns but I am going to say that it needs new guns because I will get my 10% when we buy the new guns from such and such corporation that is making the guns. This is what happens.

That happens inside the self. You are looking outside and thinking look at all these problems in the world. It is all messed up, no you are messed up. Seriously you are a reflection. All of that is reflecting to us, our inner states. This same confusion that reigns outside is reigning inside and that is the reality outside is just expressing the reality inside of the human condition. This is the state that human beings are in because they are not following this incredible order that was given

to them in fact more than that they are even denying it. They just deny it, flat out that there is an order here so if you want to understand why there is chaos outside, you just need to understand the chaos inside. When your irascible nature is controlling your rational nature, when you cannot control your anger and you can understand why things are chaotic out there. Why everybody is angry out there. If you see anybody one of these is rebelling against you, you have to struggle to suppress the rebellion. If the troops are rebelling, if they are out of control, you need to suppress the rebellion, do not kill them, you do not want to kill them, you do not want to kill them because the kingdom is not sound, it is not stable except with them, you need them, you need the concupiscent, you need the desire, you need anger. If you do not have those, the anger is your police force, you cannot defend yourself if you do not get angry you cannot defend yourself. If you do not have desire in you, there are no farmers to plough the fields to bring the food to the market place. If you do that you will be felicitous and you will fulfil the obligation of this blessing, and the robe of honour will come to you in time. This robe of honour. If not then you are damned and there is nothing but punishment and chastisement that you warrant.

This section is called three things that joy or felicity or happiness is based on and by sa'adat he means the joy of the next life so he says complete joy or the completion of joy is based on three things: the faculty of the irascible, the concupiscent. Those are the terms that we use in the West. If you go into ethics they are a little quaint now. We do not really use that term any more: irascible or concupiscent. So there is concupiscent, the irascible which is from ira, the latin word for anger. We still use the word irate, if somebody is irate, they get very angry and then concupiscent soul or the concupiscible which is the lustful soul or the soul of the appetites of the stomach and genitals and then the rational component or the faculty of knowledge.

So he says it is necessary for these matters the ghadab and the shahwa to be balanced and moderate in order that the concupiscent soul not increase and cause someone to deviate and fall into rukhas meaning lenient matters where they are just not working on themselves at all so it destroys them or the irascible nature increases and that causes him to incline towards unruliness, ungovernable. Somebody who is defiant and recalcitrant. They are not following the rules or orders so this problem he is saying the self gets imbalanced in these two ways.

So if these two strings are balanced by the guidance of the rational soul then they will follow the path of guidance. Anger if it increases then it becomes very easy to strike or to kill. That is the extreme of the sin of anger because anger is actually, the Prophet salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam said do not get angry and if he said do not get angry it is a prohibition on getting angry which means

do not allow your anger the ulema say it does not mean do not get angry but do not allow your anger to cause you to do things that take you outside of yourself and result in harm to others so he is saying if ghadab increases if the irate nature, the irascible nature increases in the self then it will lead to somebody losing control and you see that a lot in people that do not have control over that aspect of themselves. They will lose it. They will become very emotional. They become in situations where they are not in control of themselves. They can lash out at people, they can lash out verbally, they can lash out physically at people and also I mean this is a particular problem now around the globe.

I will give you an example they have a programme, I do not know, if they still have it on Arab television which is called like candid camera and they will do things like they will hide a camera and they will have a scenario. They will have a situation where somebody will do something very bothersome and it is a spinoff of an old programme in America in the sixties, I do not know if they still have it. They used to have a programme where they would do things and hide a camera and people would.....like they have a fake policeman and he will just give a person a hard time for no reason. There is no real reason why he should be doing that and people would respond to this. Now in the West on that programme, people used to get bothered by it people would get upset and after a little while and they would tell them you are on candid camera and they will all laugh. In the Arab version almost every single time right before they went to blows some big giant guy would come out and hold the man physically back and it was nothing funny about it at all. It was actually really troubling to see the behaviour because people do not have that patience.

Now there are reasons for that, there is a lot more stress people are under a lot more pressure. There is a lot of oppression. We tend to forget the average person in the average day in the Muslim world is the victim of forms of oppression if they just go to get for instance their drivers license. There is a whole experience involved in getting your drivers license. If you go California where I live you might be a little miffed if you have to wait half an hour in some of the Muslim countries you have to bribe people just to get something that the government is supposed to give you just because you are a citizen but it does not work like that so people go through these experiences and they lead to certain states of mind.

I have a friend here some of you might know him, he has an advertising company and in that advertising company he had a campaign for tea 'straighten out your state, just relax' so the campaign was all about if you drink the tea you are going to calm down so he had a scenario

where this guy comes in and he is asking to get some rukhsa some official paper that he needed and the guy tells him come back later you know like two hours or something so he gets really angry but he remembers drink tea so he goes he drinks tea and then he comes back and he says I told you to come back in two hours, he goes he drinks tea and then he comes back and he says I told you to come back in two hours. Two hours, two weeks, it does not matter. But that is social commentary on a commercial because that is the state that people are in. It is not tea that is going to help you. That is why advertisers are false advertisers. They might help a little bit (laughs). But that is what he is saying if you allow this soul to get out of hand the irascible soul you will end in this state where you could even kill somebody and that happens to people. They strike their wives or the wife strikes the husband in less common situations but it happens. So people fall into domestic violence because they cannot control themselves so the wife says something and one of the things I have pointed this out many times. One of the things for people who have not heard this, one of the things that husbands and wives get into is they fall into these what they call in pop psychology dysfunctional relationships. What will happen people in marriages they learn buttons to push if the wife gets angry at the husband she says something you are just like your father so that just sets him off or he says to her you are just like your mother or whatever. They have these buttons, they push the button and the person completely lost it. They lose control of their character.

I had my seven year old. I heard some screaming upstairs. One of them was screaming, the other one was looking sheepish. I said what is going on here? He said I pushed his buttons. So I was pleased he understood what he was doing because children learn that also. There are buttons to push but these are automatic behaviours that people get into. What this is really about. This science is about learning instead of being automatic like an automaton you have buttons that just react and you are not behaving as a conscious human being, what he is challenging you to do is fully realise your humanity, your consciousness so you are no longer behaving in a reactionary mode because that is what the irascible and the concupiscent soul are reactionary souls. They are souls that are just reacting to events. You see something you desire, you cannot control yourself. You go on automatic pilot. You get into a certain situation and you cannot control yourself. You react and become angry. People do it all the time. A good example of the irascible soul, there are people that just argue that is all they do. Every conversation they get into, they have to argue. Every single situation, they cannot control themselves because they are on this automatic pilot. He is saying is if these are not balanced in the self then this is the situation that you have. If the irascible soul is deficient, there is no jealousy, there is no zeal to protect what needs to be protected, honour. On the other hand it can be deficient so somebody that for instance if you see the situation in Lebanon. That should get your head boiling. It should not be something that you just watch and go and have your dinner, which is what a lot of people do. It just does not mean a whole lot to them because that aspect of their soul is diminished. Also you can have it is

diminished in the right things but it is excessive in the wrong things go that is also another type of imbalance that occurs.

So he says in both religion and worldly matters, when it is balanced you will see patience, courage and prudence so by patience here he means temperance and by courage, hikmah so you have these three virtues and these are called the cardinal virtues in both the Greek and the Islamic tradition. The Greeks felt that the moral virtues were four, sabr or iffah which is the ability to control oneself, courage, hikmah which is prudence or wisdom, practical wisdom and the three of these when they were balanced. They led to adl or justice so you were a just human being and this is also related to classical medicine which is Tibb al Unani if you go to Pakistan, the humdar brothers, people know the humdar brothers. That is all based on this Tibb al Unani which is Greek medicine. Tibb al Unani is based on the idea of that you have four humours in the body and each one of these four humours should be in a balance but if it loses balance then it overcomes the other three humours and you get certain behavioural characteristics so they actually see it is illness and so the idea in having this balance is related to these virtues so for instance the phlegmatic personality is somebody who is depressed, the sanguine personality is somebody – there is excess there and you have these four qualities, blood, bile black bile, and phlegm and depending on the balance of these humours was the state of the person and there is a belief that food affects these and Imam al Bajun says one the proofs that the Prophet salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam acted in accordance with this understanding is when he ate dates, he used to eat with salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam cucumber. He would say this cools off this because dates in this medicine are hot and dry and cucumbers are cold and wet so they balance. If you look at an egg, an egg is a balanced food in this science. The white is cold and wet and the yolk is hot and dry. It does not mean it is dry, like dry meaning lacking in moisture in its substance but it has to do with the qualities that they talk about.

So each of the foods are classified under this and there are extraordinary books written in the Islamic tradition where all the foods have been classified for instance coffee is very hot and dry. Hot and dry things are good for memory. Desert people are hot and dry and they have better memories than city people. People that are cold and wet tend to be slower in their mentation than people who are hot and dry but all of them lead to imbalances. The best thing is to be balanced between these so that also relates to these qualities so if you look at iffah or temperance, sabr. Sabr relates to the ability to control the shahwa so temperance relates to the concupiscent soul in that you can control the self. The shajah relates to the irascible soul. The irascible, courage is a mean between foolhardiness, being impetus, getting angry too quickly, running into the fray without really thinking about what you are doing and between cowardice which is not having

enough control. It is a balance and hikmah is related to the ilm or the rational soul, wisdom and prudence. So that is what he is saying when they are balanced you get these three virtues. And like that the concupiscent soul if it increases then you get profligacy and debauchery. You get people that transgress the boundaries and if it is deficient then you will see this dissipation where there is no energy and you will see laziness, slothfulness and slothfulness is a deadly sin also because desire, you need desire to act. People without desire ...the energy of desire is a very useful energy that needs to be challenged within the right venues.

If it is balanced then you will see the iffah. When the concupiscent soul is balanced, you see temperance of contentment. People eat, they have enough food, they do not need to go to extremes. They have their relations, they have relations within moderation so that is basically he is saying when you have this balance in the soul then people are healthy and you have these virtues.

The next section is the section on the states of the heart with its troops. So he says know the heart with its troops has states and qualities or attributes. Some of it is called virtue and others it is called vice. Some of it is called good character and others. It is called bad character. So with good character, with beautiful character he reaches the degree of felicity and with bad character or vile character he is destroyed and falls into damnation. And so each of these are four different types of species of akhlaq. So each one is a genus:

- The character of demons
- The character of ruminants
- The character of predators
- The character of angels

So deeds, foul deeds when they are related to eating, drinking, sleeping and copulation. These are the qualities of the ruminants. They are the beasts. This is the character of the beasts. So people that overeat. It is a bestial quality. People that drink too much, people that sleep too much, people that copulate too much, these are all the bestial qualities and what he is saying is that they have the character of the bahaim. So they are closer to the behima than they are to a human being and again that is one of the things that you see people are becoming more bestial, obsessions with all of these things. If you look at the time that people put into food is amazing. Ibn Ata'ullah says and this is 9th century quite late people will be at the greengrocer and they will spend long periods of time looking at the fruit, feeling the fruit, to pick the fruit. He said that

they will take a piece and squeeze and make sure it is just ripe and put each one in. He said when they go to pray they pray like the chicken pecking so he said the things for the stomach they give all of this time. For their prayer, they give no time and he said the prayer is eternal. It is going to Allah. The food that you are picking out is going to the toilet. That is where it is heading.

So he said what a state that human beings are in. So this is what he is saying if these are your obsessions then you are like the ruminants. You are like beasts and also deeds that are related to anger, striking, killing, argumentation. These are the characteristics of predators, aggressiveness. That is what the predators have so your character is closer to the lions and the lepers. It is not human. And also the qualities of the ego, nafs. Things like subterfuge, faithlessness, disloyalty, deception. Strategies, plotting and planning. Those are all qualities of the demons so when that is your focus you become a demonic character and if you do not think that people plot. People plot, people plot in the most petty of matters. People will plot your downfall at the office, a place where you work. There are people that are literally plotting to make sure you do not get the promotion. This is the state of people. This is going on all the time. All around us. These are the states. There are ruminants out there, predators and demons. Some people are an admixture of all three.

And then he says and also the actions are the deeds of the intellect and intellect unfortunately he is using intellect as a very specific meaning now we use intellect to refer more to cognitive processes, mathematics and things like that. The aql, the real aql is a light and it restrains the soul from its caprice. That is the real role of the aql. It is there to do that. The deeds of the intellect are mercy. Why? Because have mercy on those on the earth and the One in the heaven will have mercy on you. That is revelation. Revelation illuminates the intellect so once you know that rahma is a reason for which rahma is bestowed upon you, you become a more merciful person so that is the intellect when it is functioning properly. It is directing our soul to those things that are beneficial to the soul in the next life because that is the purpose of the intellect is to benefit you not here but in the next life as well as here but importantly is the next life because it is eternal. So your temporal existence is going to determine the nature of your eternal existence so if you are a person of intellect then the intellect is going to be guiding you in that way.

Knowledge, increasing one's knowledge, striving to be a person of knowledge. Jahiliya is ignorance. The Shaykh talked in the class on seerah about the age of ignorance like the man who said I am from Huzayah. I am from the tribe of Huzayah. If they go astray I go astray. If they are guided, I am guided. That is the age of ignorance. I just follow my tribe. My tribe right or wrong. My country, right or wrong. We are number one. That is all ignorance. Somebody who is knowledgeable transcends those types of imitations of ignorance because that is what ignorance is. It limits people and also charitable actions. Actions that are beneficial and good and these are the characteristics or virtues of the angels. So now you are moving into the angelic realm. The

people that are preoccupied with these are on the angelic realm and then he says know that within the shell of the son of Adam are four things:

- The dog
- The pig
- The shaytan
- The angel

So in each person are these four qualities. Quality of the dog, quality of the pig, quality of the demon and quality of the angel.

The dog is blameworthy in its qualities but it is not blameworthy in its form. Its form is not blameworthy, the way it looks. Nothing wrong with the way it looks but it is blameworthy in its behaviour so if you train a dog, a dog can actually become a praiseworthy creature but if he is not trained he is blameworthy. He is jumping all over, he is spilling things. He is aggressive. If he sees something he does not know, he starts growling. He does not why he is growling. It could be a friend not a foe but he does not distinguish between friend and foe. He is just in that aggressive mode so the dog, that is the state of the dog.

And like that the demon and angel. The blame and praise of these two creatures is in their qualities. It is not in their forms. The Prophet salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam said God does not look at your forms but at your deeds and what is the state of your heart and intention. That is what Allah looks at. He does not look at your outward forms. It is not in their form or how they have been created and like the pig is blameworthy in his qualities, in his characteristics. He is not blameworthy in his external appearance. You cannot blame a pig for the way it looks but the way it behaves, that is another thing.

And the son of Adam was commanded to expose the darkness of ignorance with the light of knowledge, with the light of intellect. That is what human beings were commanded to do by Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala to do. To expose the darkness of ignorance with the light of intellect and the light of intellect is guided by revelation so that you have been given an intellect and if it is illuminated by revelation then it can dispel the darkness of ignorance but if it is not, it cannot because no matter how intelligent a person if they do not have a knowledge to balance these things out. If they do not have a knowledge that tells them in this situation you behave thus, in this situation you have behave thus you will not know, you will not see your own behaviour, you will not challenge yourself. You will not look at your intentions.

So all of this is out of fear of this fitnah. Fitnah is a beautiful word in that it conveys an immense amount of meaning in one word. The word fatanah means to test the metals for impurities so when you heat metal and it begins to melt away, you get what is called dross. That is what fitnah does. It reveals the dross of humanity. So I will give you an example. When you had the cartoon controversy in Denmark, remember that. See everybody is like now it is over. Fitnah is over and everybody goes...the cartoons are still there. They are still there. You can look it up on the internet or wherever. They are still there. The fitnah is over. Now the 30 dead people, they are dead. They are in their graves now because of that fitnah or however many people died. So the fitnah is over. That is what fitnah is. It reveals peoples character based on the circumstances.

Now in Mauritania, how did they respond to the fitnah? Unfortunately the news did not cover Mauritania. They, the ulema had an evening where they all got together in a huge auditorium and people came and they recited Qasidas against Denmark so they had a poetry protest. Then the next day they had a demonstration. Before the demonstration they handed out flyers – the adab on protest and amongst the things that they guided the people to was not to anything inappropriate, not to break the law, not to throw anything, not to attack or harm the Danish embassy because it was an embassy that was legitimately there and so it had the umman of the Muslims. So that is how they deal with it, the fitnah. They dealt with it like Muslims but other people. They did not. They dealt with it like the dog. The irascible soul. They completely lost it. They went crazy and threw things. A lot of it is that it is an opportunity to do that because there is a lot of pressure. A lot of those people they are not religious people. They just oh a riot. Seriously they just go to be a part of what is happening. Something is happening. I mean there is some places I know, there is some in South Asia, any excuse for a good riot. In Karachi, it is not today. True or not true. That is what people want to go out and just not because they are in a state and so the circumstance provides the excuse to behave accordingly. That is what fitnah is. So out of fear of fitnah we have been commanded to dispel ignorance with intellect in every situation because in every situation if it is an ethical situation there is either jahal or aql.

Now one of the meanings of jahal or aql. Now one of the meanings of jahal is also to act with zealotry. To act without hilm. Hilm is forbearance. He was the most forbearing of men. He never lost it. If you study his seerah you will not see that the Prophet salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam ever lost control of his nature. It did not happen because he was always in possession of his aql. The aql restrains. Even when he was angry his anger was measured. It was measured. It was appropriate because there is a time for anger. It is not just to accept everything and do not get angry. No you should get angry and things should make you angry that are unjust, that are improper but how does that anger manifest. That is the difference. So the Prophet there is none of you except that he has a demon. Even I have demon. The Prophet. Even I have a demon but Allah has helped me with my demon so he became a Muslim. So he is telling you that you have a

demon. When Aysha got very angry once, the Prophet salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam said did your shaytan give you a visit? She said do I have a demon? Everybody has a demon so now you know so what is going on? Are you behaving as a human being or are you under the influence of a demon in your behaviour? That is the question. Is this from your demon? The Greeks believed that too also they called it the demon. That there was a spirit that influenced people and it was either negative or positive. So those are the four things.

The qalb is the irascible soul. The metaphor of that. I gave a talk in Oxford and I was talking about the Danish cartoons and I said in that talk that if you have a sleeping dog and you take a stick and you hit it and then it bites you who is responsible? Is the dog responsible for biting you or are you responsible for eliciting that response from the dog? That is an ethical question and one of the Muslims got really upset that I was comparing Muslims to dogs but I was basing it on this idea that this is part of Muslim ethical tradition that the dog is the irascible part of your soul and the dog is a good quality when it is guarding. When the dog is guarding but if it is biting your baby and tearing its leg off like the pitbull. People that have pitbulls and so the neighbour's baby is out playing so his pit bull goes over and ...that happens in America. You have people who have pit bulls. There are people who have pitbull natures and they are not aware of it so if you do not have your pit bull nature on a leash so when it is going crazy, you are restraining it so it does not go and eat next door's baby so that is the dog's nature and then you have the khinzir nature. People have the khinzir nature. The pig nature. The pig eats all day long. It lives in its own filth. If it gets too hungry it will eat its own children. That is the pig. So that is the pig nature will actually destroy the human being if it gets out of control but if you can control it then it becomes beneficial for you.

Then shaytan the demon then the malak. He also calls it the shaykh which is the sage as well. Like that is the concupiscent and irascible so it has to be under the sovereignty the control of the intellect so that they do not do anything except with the command of the intellect. The intellect is the one guiding the concupiscent and irascible, the dog and the pig, it is the shepherd. The intellect is the shepherd of these two qualities. If he is able to do that then the result is beautiful characteristics. The result is virtue. That is the result that the person becomes a virtuous character and these are the qualities of angels and this is the seed of felicity in the next life. You are planting the seeds of felicity in the next life by acting according to this. But if they act in contradiction to that and serve the concupiscent and irascible soul the result is vile qualities. The result is vicious character and these are the qualities of demons and these are the seeds of wretchedness in the next life. This will manifest in a dream as if he is standing in a state of total construction serving the dog and the pig. So somebody sees in a dream that they are serving a dog or a pig and they are in a state of construction. This is what it means. That is what he is saying in the science of dreams, that is what that means. And this type of person is comparable to

the one who takes a group of Muslims prisoner and hands them over to kaafireen to disbelievers. It is as if you are taking the intellect prisoner and you are giving the intellect the Muslim. You are giving them over to the kaafireen. That is what he is saying. That when you surrender your will to the concupiscent and your irascible soul to the pig or the dog and the demon this is what you have done, you have surrendered Muslims to the kaafireen because they are ingrates, they do not appreciate the naimah, blessings.

So how will you be on the day of judgment if you have jailed the angel? Your intellect. Under the sovereignty of desire and anger you have taken the king and put the king under the sovereignty under desire and anger, how will your state be? So you have put the king into the hands of the dog or pig.

And know today that the human being is in the form of Adamic creature but tomorrow the realities will be revealed and the true state will be shown so what he is saying is that you might have the form of a human being but your meaning is dog or a pig or a demon and that meaning is going to manifest and that is why one of the blessings of this ummah is the Prophet salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam said it will not have transmogrification externally. The external form will not be transformed into a pig or a donkey or a rat. That will not happen to this ummah, any of the ummah which includes ummah dawah, ummah istijabal because the ummah is the Prophet salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam we forget this the European, the Asians, the Americans they are all from in our belief, they are all from the ummah of the Prophet salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam we forget that, they are his ummah because the ummah ad-dawah, people that were invited to his path and the people that responded to the invitation. They are all considered from the ummah which is why the ummah of Lut are the people he was sent to. They are called the people of Lut. They did not believe in him but they are still his people. So even the people that disbelieve in the Prophet are from his ummah.

So from the blessings of the Prophet salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam there is no outward transformation. People will not be exposed. You can see pigs and donkeys all these animal forms that are low, you will see them out there. One of the interesting things about extinction is that it is not the pigs that are going extinct, it is not the cockroaches, it is not the rats, it is the high quality of falcons, it is the eagles, it is the lepers, that is what is going to extinct. It is not these common creatures. They are the ones going extinct. Because those qualities in human beings are going extinct, because we are the reflection of, all of creation is in us so those things the whales that are going extinct, that is because those qualities in us are disappearing. That is what happens out there. It is a reflection. So there are plenty of cockroaches, really there are plenty of pigs but those high qualities are leaving. One of the things that Moroccan poet Shaykh ibn al Habib said

the cosmos are meanings set up in images. You see an image but there is a meaning behind the image.

Whoever understands this is among the people of discernment in other words people that perceive meanings as opposed to the sensory, the sensoria are there we experience the sensorial but all of the sensoria have meanings. Why are we attracted to flowers? What is the attraction? Why are we attracted to colour? Because they reflect meanings. They are qualities of God, beauty so what you are seeing is jamal and that is what you are attracted to and jamal is an attribute of God so you are witnessing an attribute of God manifesting in creation and that is what you are attracted to. If you do not see that, you are like the beast. You are a person of sensoria because you are not recognising the meaning. Why are we attracted to beauty? Because it is an attribute of God. Why do we not like ugliness? Because God is not ugly and that is why the fitrah nature when it is healthy it is not attracted to those things that are ugly. When the nature becomes distorted, corrupted it is actually attracted to ugly things. It likes ugly sounds. That is why if you look at the way people dress today, it is ugly dress really. They put like ugly tattoos on their bodies and they do these things because they are not well. Those are all indications of their states but they are unaware of that. They are not even aware that they are sick because people in fitnah will not do things like that. Those are distortions of the fitrah state. Human beings have always dressed....if you look at embellishment on Muslim clothes, why do Muslims put embellishments on their clothes? Why in Afghanistan? Why do they do that? They could just have a functional cloak but why do they do the embroidery? What is that? It is in their nature, they are people of ihsan. So they make things beautiful.

You can make just a functional carpet but why make the design. That is an ugly design in my estimation but why make the design. Why did whoever did this do this? Whoever made this here, why did they do this? They took time to do this. We could just be sitting up here in a functional thing without flowers just sitting here. What is that in human being that wants to do that? That is ihsan, ihsan means to make beautiful. Ahsana means to being about husun. Asma al Husnaa the beautiful names of God. Why are they beautiful? Because they are qualities of God. Anything that you see beautiful in the world is manifesting a quality of God. Those are the meanings of the forms so the forms are there but the meanings in the forms are what the people of discernment see. They do not see the externals. They see the internals. The eye of the heart not the outward eye. So this is what he is saying that there are people out there that you see them in the form a human being but they are not humans, they are demons. They are pigs, dogs. That is the reality of their state.

And it is not for you or me to judge because we could be in the same thing so you are pointing the finger at somebody else, look at that dog over there and you are a dog yourself. So it is much

more important to be concerned with your own state. What is my state? Not what is their state? What is my state?

So those who are overwhelmed by the irascible soul they will stand on that day like a dog. And those who are overwhelmed by their concupiscent soul they will stand on that day as a pig. Because the form follows the function. The form follows the qualities. In physiology you say form follows function, whatever the function of the organ is, the form follows the function whatever the function of the organ is, the organ is going to be designed to fulfil the function. So this is the reality. So the forms will follow the meanings. So people see in their sleep the reality of their inner state. So now you know the reality of man his internal reality is one of these four. So it is absolutely necessary that the person is vigilant and observes his movements his states of movement and stillness to see among which of the four does he belong so this is about introspection. Looking at yourself. Reflecting on your behaviour. Your character. What am I? Am I a pig, dog, demon or am I an angel?

Because these qualities emerge in the heart and will remain with him until the day of judgment. These are the qualities so whatever your heart is filled with. If it is filled with anger that is the reality. If it is filled with desire that is its reality. If it is filled with treachery, unfaithfulness then it's got the demonic qualities and if it is filled with good then it has the angelic qualities. Those are its realities.

So if those things the righteous perpetual truths that go on forever, your dhikr, your prayer, your charity, your zakat, your hajj, all of those qualities every good act that you did even smiling in the face of your brother and sister if you are a sister even smiling in the face of your brother and sister that is a charity that goes on, it is perpetual so all of these qualities are going to be preserved by Allah and these are all the seeds of felicity. These are all the things that you are planting here and you will reap the harvest in the akhirah.

And if anything remains other than that these are the seeds of wretchedness, these are the seeds of damnation. The son of Adam is neither free or released from motion or stillness, you are either doing something or you are not doing something. You are either in a state of haraqah or sakinah. In the duas of the Prophet salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam said in my motion and in my stillness. So you are in one state or the other and your heart is like a glass. It is like a glass.

And the foul characteristics are like smoke and like darkness. They are going to distort the glass so that you cannot see through the glass. So if these are bad qualities reach the heart then they cause a darkness that does not enable you to see with clarity.

And the good characteristics are like light and clarity. If they reach the heart they purify the heart from the darkness of disobedience, from the darkness of disobedience. If these good qualities are being acted then they cause a light to emanate in the heart so the heart becomes functional. You can see with it. The Prophet salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam said follow up a bad deed with a good deed so it wipes it. The effects of it are wiped away. It is a polishing because there is oxidation that occurs and that is what he is saying.

And the heart is either illuminating or it is darkening. It is one of the two. It will either endarken or enlighten and no one has salvation except if they come to Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala with a sound heart.

There is no benefit on that day except for the one who comes to Allah with a sound heart.

Section on the wonders of the heart

So he says that know the heart has two doors to the knowledges: the uloom sciences, Sciences in the old use of that word to know. One of them is for dreams or really visions he means here because Muslims discriminate between dreams that are from the ego and nafs and spiritual experiences that happen during sleep that are from Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala

and then the second is in the waking states or the waking consciousness so it is the external door to the outward world. When he sleeps he shuts the door of the senses because the experience that occurs in the sleep it is not of this world. You are entering into the world of meanings. This world has meaning but most people are overwhelmed by the sensory perception of the world, the sensorial so they do not delve into the meanings, they do not see the outward form. The Quran says they know the outward of this world but about the real world there in a state of heedlessness so people experiencing the world experience and somnambulant state, they are sleepwalkers. The world is like dreams but they do not know what it really means. People have jumbled dreams – in Surah Yusuf when the king asks them what his vision is. They say this is just meaningless dreams because they do not know what it means so they just deny it has meaning and that is a very common strategy for dealing with what you do not know what something means when you are ignorant of something you become its enemy because you do not know. Or that does not mean anything because you do not understand it. That is one way of dealing with meaning is to deny meaning because you do not understand it. He is saying that when you sleep you are shutting off the world of the senses because the senses are the biggest veil that Allah has made for man. Senses veil you from reality and people that are of the senses they cannot get beyond the senses so they are trapped in the senses which is why in many traditions the basic strategy

was t flee from the senses so if you look in Hinduism, Buddhism, they go to great means to turn off the sensorial to try to get to meaning.

In the Christian tradition, the same is true. The monks would literally completely detach from the world, go to monasteries often in deserts because desert is a very useful place to shut off the sensoria because there is so little stimulate you in terms of the senses. If you look at the Ibrahim alayhi sallam it is amazing that he put his family in Makkah, because it is a place he described it as a valley without any foliage and often the desert was a place where people went, hermits, monks, desert fathers, they literally went into the deserts of Sinai and attempted to disconnect from the world.

Islam if you look at the early period of the Prophet's spiritual life, what did he do? He went to a cave and a cave is sensory deprivation. If you go into a cave you deprive yourself of the senses because one of the things you deprive yourself from is light and light is a major door to the senses, external light.

One of the things you do as a strategy to help your prayer if you are somebody who is easily distracted. It is usually makruh to close your eyes during prayer but it is permitted if you are somebody who is easily distracted because the eyes open up the door of the senses and so this is what they would do is disconnect, meditation, all of these different things but at the end of the Prophet's life or not even at the end but later when he is in Madinah. He is praying in front of his wife and she is literally on her bed in front of him and he is in tahujjud in a complete state of witnessing with Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala and completely distracted by any external temptations or forms and even when he went on the Miraj. You could imagine if the unseen is being unveiled to you because that is what was happening. There is inward sensory experience also so there is a sensory experience of the unseen world. It is inwards not outward but it is an experience but his vision was not distracted by the unseen world because he was so focused on his Lord even in the midst of all these wonders that are being revealed before his eyes. His eyes did not divert, neither did his heart because his heart was completely in tune with reality and reality is unicity. Reality is unicity, absolutely unadulterated oneness so there is no other in reality there is no distraction in reality. Reality is pure. So what he is saying is when you sleep you are being deprived of the door of the senses and you are opened up to an internal door. Door of the inward and there are elements of the unseen that are being opened up to you in the unseen world and it is from the alam al malakut so this is a door to knowledge to the heart. This is why the Prophet salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam said true dreams are 1/46th of prophecy. 1/46th of prophecy and true dreams are the access that the average human being has to prophecy and that is why people will see dreams come true. They will have meanings revealed to them in dreams and these are related to prophecy. That is what that hadith means so it is a door to perception, dreams. It is an opening to

the malakut which is what in the Gospel is called the Kingdom of the heavens and there are many references to this in the Gospel. Isa alayhi sallam talked about the Kingdom of the heavens being revealed to his disciples. So those things that are from the unseen world. It is like a light that is revealing things and perhaps this understanding and illumination of these things is stipulated upon some knowledge of the interpretation of dreams in other words he will not be able to understand what they mean unless he has access to interpretation of dreams and not everyone has that knowledge. That knowledge is limited to certain people. Abu Bakr had knowledge of the meanings of dreams so the Prophet salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam himself had to ask Abu Bakr what dreams meant because that was one of the knowledges that Abu Bakr radiallahu anhu had so interpretation of dreams is not a knowledge that everybody has. Some people have it. It is haram. If you do not know the interpretation of dreams to tell people what dreams means because true dreams are a portion of prophecy so it is as if you are making commentary on something from the unseen world that is true so you should not do it if you do not have knowledge of it and then he says as for what is of the outward people think that this is what the waking state is that they think the waking state of reality but the waking state is actually a dream for most people. They are not in reality. They only think they are in reality so that is what people think this outward door of perception is but he said it is what you see between sleep and they also think that what is seen between sleep, what is seen while you are awake is something you should have knowledge of. That you have knowledge of. That you have knowledge of it because you see it while you are awake but it is not true. People see things all the time but they do not know what it means. There are signs all around the people. There are signs everywhere but they do not know how to read them but they assume they do because they are in a waking state. They might not necessarily assume they know what their dreams are but they automatically assume they know what their outward perception of, what a tree means. They just assume they know what things are in the outward . He is saying it seems natural they would do that but in reality what they are seeing in the outward is nothing of the real world.

They are signs, they are indicators. That is all they are. They are indicators. That is all they are. They are indicators. Nothing of the real world but they think it is the real world because they are trapped in this outward world veiled by their senses. But what is understood in this state is not sleep and it is not this normal wakeful consciousness. That is what should be more worthy of understanding of this marifa of it than what they know through their senses so understanding reality that is what people should have knowledge of not of this assumed state of what knowledge is. This outward experience of this world that they are assuming is reality and then he says what you should know concerning this matter is that the heart is like a mirror. The heart is like a mirror and the Al-Lawh Al-Mahfuz which contains all of what Allah has decreed in the world is also like a mirror because in it is the reflection of every existing thing so it is like a mirror also.

And when one mirror is placed in front of the other mirror then you see the reflecting in that mirror of all the things that are on the other mirror. You put one mirror next to the other mirror. It is going to reflect what is in that mirror. I do not know if you have ever done that. If you put two mirrors together. It is a very strange phenomenon so what he says and this is part of Imam al-Ghazali's teaching that he believes that the heart is open to unveilings. So he says if the heart is pure and free of the preoccupation of and the desires of this world then it will see what the world is in reality. It will see the realities and he says that but if it is preoccupied with desire and filled with the world, this kingdom of the heavens is veiled from it so it does not have access to it. It does not have any access to it.

But if in the state of its sleep it is free of the attachments of the sensory then it is able to view or look upon this malakut world. The mulk is the world of senses it is everything you can see and touch. The malakut is the world of the unseen which is around us. It is also true alongside of us and so he is saying that you will be able to see the essences of this other world and you will some of the meanings that are in the Al-Lawh Al-Mahfuz. Some of these realities not all because it is only Allah that knows all of the unseen but people have these unveilings from that world. Of all people the Prophet salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam had the greatest fortune of that.

And then if he shuts the door of the senses then this imaginal world will emerge. This is a technical term. It is not really imagination but it is the imaginal world. So what he will see is under the veil of the externalities so what he is saying is when shut off the senses you still got the imagination so there is still a filter. You do not see even the reality of the unseen world as it truly is. You are still veiled by the nature of your experience.

Then he says you will not see reality as it truly is, it will not be unveiled to you completely because you are still filtered by your experiences in this world as long as you are in this world there are filters. But if you die in other words your heart dies. Your sensory consciousness dies so the possessor of the heart, the imagination goes, the senses go. The imagination is the body. It is still a type of veil. It is something we need. We need the senses to have some knowledge of reality but the senses veil us and the imagination you need to have some knowledge of reality also but it still a veil. The reason that we can imagine paradise is that we have an imagination so you can think of things of the unseen world that you are told: angels. We can imagine beings that are made out of light, that have things. We do not know what they are in reality but Allah has given us an imagination and the imagination is a door to perception of reality but it is still a filter just like the senses are a filter.

Then he says at that time you will see without any illusion and you will see without any imagination. We have removed the veil from you and now you have piercing sight. You see reality as it truly is. That is what happens when you die and that is what you will feel like you have woken from a dream. When you die it is an awakening because you are no longer veiled by the senses or the imagination. You are going to experience things as they truly are.

So what he is saying is that your heart is a mirror. Now what is a mirror? Is the mirror the thing itself? It is not, is it? It is a reflection of the thing. When you look in the mirror you wonder do I really look like that? Is that how people are perceiving? You do not know because you cannot see yourself. It is a very strange thing that Allah has done for all of us. We can see other people but we cannot see ourself except through a mirror. But the mirror, is it distorting it? You know how mirrors distort sometimes. Your face looks longer then it does, shorter or wider. That is like that also. The heart you do not know is my perception of reality distorted if you are in introspective person. A lot of people do not think of these things. So the mirror might be distorted. It might need reframing. It might need recasting. So that is what Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala said in Surah Al Kahf. We have removed the veil from you so now you see every single sight as clear as day. And know that there is nobody except that sound thoughts will enter his heart and the clarification of truth will enter his heart by way of inspiration. Everybody will have true inspiration if they are human, they are going to have true inspiration in life like Winston Churchill said everybody stumbles on the truth at least once in their life but like myself they usually get up brush themselves off and carry on. That is what kufr is. It is when you know the truth but you just choose to ignore it. You choose to cover it up. He is saying people will be exposed to the truth in their life and their hearts will be open to the truth by way of inspiration. They will not be by way of the senses, it is something that comes by the way where it came from.

Because the heart is from this other world. It is not of this world. Your consciousness is not of this world. It is of another world. That is what consciousnesses and that is why sleep is so important because that is what sleep does. It is a door to that other world. It is a door to that other world. You will hear people say it isn't that strange? I had a dream and then it happened, isn't that strange? They cannot understand it. Isn't that strange? Isn't that weird because they do not know what it means. Most people are cut off from these realities so when they experience them they experience them it is strange, wondrous. There are other people and that is their normal state. It is not strange at all. It is just their normal state because they have much more access to reality than most people.

The senses were created for this world. The world of the mulk, of the dominion of the outward dominion and for that reason he is veiled from looking onto the other world if his heart, if he is not empty of the distractions of the senses so if you are not empty of these distractions then you are veiled. You do not have access which is the state of most people. We are preoccupied and then he says but do not think that this capacity is open during sleep and death only.

Do not think it is only these two means, you have to die or go to sleep to see reality. Know it opens to those in a wakeful state to those who are sincere in their jihad and in their riyadhah and that is why Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi from Morocco, he said whoever is sincere for forty days, since for forty days seeking God, his heart will open. The baseerah is open so if you have sincerity in your struggle and spiritual exercise and you are free of this desire and anger. These are the two great enemies, shahwa and ghadab. The concupiscent and irascible soul. If you are not free of their sovereignty so that your quwa and nadhika is the one who has authority over them and from foul character and from vile deeds. You are not freed from these also so not only do you have to be sincere in your struggle but you have actually have to be realised. This is what in this tradition, there are these stages. The first stage is takhliya, the emptying out and then you go to tahliyyah and then the final stage is tajliyah which is where you have the unveiling so the tahliyyah is emptying the self of the desire and anger and emptying the self of vile characteristics and then the tahliyyah is embellishing. The self, adorning the self with Prophetic character that you begin to follow the sunnan not just the outward sunnan. There are plenty of people who cut their moustache or trim their nails or wear their robe a certain way or eat with three fingers or go into the masjid with the right foot or go out with the left and say with the duas when they do certain things, when they drink and eat whatever they do they follow the outward sunnan which are important. They should not be belittled in any shape or form because they are part of the Prophetic character. They are the externals of the Prophetic character but who are the ones who take on the inward Prophetic character, the akhlaq of the Prophet salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam, his forbearance, his patience, his mercy, his charity, his generosity, his kindness, his humility. That is the tahliyyah. Adorning the self with the qualities and characteristics of the Prophets and all of the characters of the Prophets are in the character of the Prophet salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam. He has all of the characters and qualities of the Prophets. So this is what he is saying.

If you do that then these things will happen, so if he is sitting in an empty place, a place like the mehrab, that is where Maryam was, right. She was in the mehrab, what was she doing? What was the Prophet salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam doing in the cave of Hira? What was he doing in his tahujjud? He was in a place where he was free from distractions and he basically cut off the inroads of the senses and opened up his inner eye. You have this eye and it is closed and you

close it like that and you do not see anything. You open it suddenly and you see things. You have an inner eye also. The inner eye for most people is not only closed, it is like a spiritual cataract.

One does not have access, it is literally blinded by the veils of wrong action, by the veils of ignorance, by the veils of desire, all of these different things, that is what is what the state of the spiritual eye is. The spiritual eye is more sensitive than the physical eye. Look at what happens when a little piece of dust gets in your eye or a hair like a hair follicle from your eyelash if it gets in the eye and look what displeasure and distraction you fall into. You cannot even open your eye. You cannot see. The spiritual eye is more sensitive than the outward eye and the spiritual eye if you open it up and look what we fill our sensory eyes with. They are all inroads to our spiritual eye. So the spiritual eye is blinded by the senses and one of the most extraordinary aspects of the Prophetic character is lowering the eyes even when the Prophet salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam walked. He said one of the adabs of the road is khatil basar when you are on the road so what about all these forms that we take in. What about all the images? If you live in North America, the average person takes in over 3000 advertisements a day. 3000 advertisements a day so the modern world is just completely spiritually blinding people. That is what it is doing. The modern world is like a spike being driven through the spiritual eye of man and that is why we are blinded by a species. We do not even know there is a spiritual world because we do not have access to it anymore. We have been cut off. We have been severed from our roots. Our roots are in the unseen world. Our roots are not here. When you look at the tree, the trees roots are not in the seen world, you cannot see the roots the tree is dead. You have to pull the tree up to see the roots but the roots of the tree are in the unseen world that our roots are in the unseen world. That is why we are alive. So people cannot see those roots. They do not even know they exist, if a child looks at a tree, it does not know it has roots. You have to some level of knowledge to know that trees have roots. The same is true for the human being. You have to know what are our roots. Where do we come from? What is our source? What is our seed? How do we grow? Where did consciousness come from? What is the purpose of consciousness?

So if you sit in an empty place and you turn off the inroads of the senses and you open up your inner eye. Internal hearing just like you have external hearing you also have internal hearing like the hafidh, people hear hawafidh, this is not like mad people who see and hear things also, these are people who have....and part of that is people have unveilings as well. Mad people. Unveilings can lead to madness also so the veilings of the world are also a rahmah of Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala. If the world was unveiled to you, you would go mad and that happens to people. Door of perceptions can be opened and people can go mad. Door of perceptions can be forced open with drugs and people have experiences. You have inward sensory experiences and inward meaning

experiences. You have inward terrestrial experiences so they are different and there is a whole science of discerning what experiences are and it is not just us. The Catholic church has this science. Buddhists have this science. Hindus have this science. This is known in other traditions also not in the same way in our tradition but they do discern between different types of experiences. The Catholic church has a science of discernment and they believe it is a gift of the holy spirit that you are able to determine whether an experience is a genuine spiritual experience or whether it is an emotional experience that you think is a spiritual experience. You have got people in Pentecostal states speaking in tongues, feeling the holy spirit throughout their body. They have physical sensations. Do not deny their reality. If you meet people that have been born again they have had very real experiences.

They have had very real and powerful experiences and that is why often their faith is very strong but a lot of those experiences are not spiritual experiences. They are actually, they are inward experiences that sometimes have physical aspects to them but they are of the inward sensory not the inward meaning so they are not true experiences but that is a knowledge to discern between these type of things. It is a sophisticated knowledge that people have. So people can be deluded. This is very easy. That is why when you really dip into serious practice you need a guide. You cannot do this on your own and Imam al Ghazali did and he is very rare. They are people that do do it but the Prophet salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam had Jibril alayhi sallam so then he says and then his heart is entrained with this malakut so this is called muraqabah which is where he is in a state of awareness of the divine presence. He is not saying it with his tongue until the ego is completely defaced so he does not experience the world. This is what they call fana and this is from the book so we are just looking at what he is saying about this knowledge so he says then this capacity is open. And then he begins to see in a waking state the same as the true visions in his sleeping state so his waking state becomes in which his spiritual inner eye is open. He begins to see the world as it truly is in reality. He is no longer veiled so he is experiencing the divine presence.

This is the state of the Prophet salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam without a doubt and it is the state of his sahaba and it is the state of the salihun you know if you are with the shuykh like Shaykh Abdullah bin Bayyah and I have travelled with them and seen them. That is the state he is in all the time. He is looking out and you are seeing him look out but he is not seeing what you are seeing. You sit with Murrabul Hajj. I mean you see it. You sit with him and he is another state. He is present absent. He just does dhikr all the time. He does dhikr in his sleep and I lived in his tent with him so I slept on the bed with him. He does dhikr in his sleep. He reads Quran in his sleep I saw it with my own eyes. There was a man in Morocco, he did salat un nabi in his sleep.

He would snore, he was literally snoring and doing prayer on the Prophet salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam so I have seen it. It is like the people who see are not like the people who are told about something. People doing prayer on the Prophet salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam and they are sleeping.

Then he sees the spirits of the angels, the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. It is in the gospels and it is talked about a lot. The kingdom of the heavens and the earth. It is the same teaching and he sees things you cannot elucidate and you cannot articulate in a book. These are things that I cannot write about. The earth was folded up for me and I saw its various easts and wests. What does that mean? Now we know that at every horizon there is a new east and a new west. As you are moving there is always a new east and west. It is not just one east and west. We know that it has multiple easts and wests based on where you are right so the Prophet salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam I saw all of the earth. It was shown to me all of the different horizons of the earth so he had knowledge of multiple horizons.

It is an unseen experience and like that we showed Ibrahim the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. It is in the Quran. We showed Ibrahim the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. Why? So that he had certainty. So he had certainty, yaqin. This is how the knowledge of the Prophets come. They do not have book learning. Their knowledge is not of the books. They were not taught by books. We learn by books. The Prophets did not have book learning. The Prophet salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam had learning by just having the hand placed in his back in the hadith. It is a sahih hadith. I knew everything by just having the hand having been placed on my back at the point of the seal of prophecy and he said I knew everything. So those are the doors of perception that the Prophets have. We learn through the senses, we touch, dissect, feel, take apart, we open up the heart, we look in the four chambers. There are people that know the heart has four chambers and they do not have to look inside the heart because it is unveiled to them but this is how we learn by taking things apart. There are people who do not learn to do that. They look at something and they know what it is because it is unveiled to them. Disconnect, detach, cut off in order to go to Him, in order to be open to your Lord you need to detach from other than your Lord. It means to disconnect from everything, to purify the heart from everything and to beseech him with your entire being. It is to beseech him with your entire being. People make dua right people I make dua. Maybe they are thinking about other things. How they are just not really there. People when they pray they are not present at all. The sahaba according to hadith a man was shot with an arrow, they waited until he prayed to pull it out because he did not feel it. We have that in the books because he was in prayer and he was completely oblivious to pain. Those are real experiences that people have.

This is the path of the people of tassawuf and Imam al Ghazali is you read his al-Munqidh min al-dalal he said they were basically four types of knowledge. Scientific knowledge. Philosophical knowledge. People that used theories, it is not scientific in that way but people would come up with theories. They could be right or wrong. It is what we call opinion but not opinion in the modern sense of the world. Opinion is a type of knowledge. Opinion is conclusions that are arrived at after much thought. It could be right or wrong. It is not like knowledge in that way but it is a type of knowledge. It is not just uneducated, we call it educated opinion but it used to be that is what opinion meant and then there is revelation which is from the Prophets and then there is kasht which is the knowledge of the people of tassawuf and he also felt that the people of tasawuuf that he felt that their path was the soundest path because it led to a type of faith which is rooted in believing what you were told actually that you have experienced the truth of these things and he felt that was truly following the Prophets salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam because you were not just following him in words and deeds but you are actually following him in his state in the same way you cannot follow him in his words and deeds as he was indeed and the same is true in his state but that is what he understood and it is not the, just like you have fuqaha that are a disaster, you have people who claim tasawuuf are a disaster and part of the problem is when the majority of people today are so far I mean people from South Asia you know what the state of the pirs, it is a disaster. You go to Egypt and Morocco and a lot of the Muslim world and you look at the people who have these claims and they have given tasawwuf was part of Islam. It was the inner dimension of Islam and the best book for it is Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din, that is the best book that we have in this science.

But the way of learning, book learning that is the way of the ulema but this is not book learning, that is what he is saying. I will give you an example Ibn Ataullah who was an alim who became a sufi. He was originally an alim and then he becomes a sufi, then had openings and that is where we got the Hikam of Ibn Ataullah. Izzedin Abdul Salaam used to go sit in his class and he could say these words are coming directly in close proximity to the Merciful in other words he was saying it is not book learning. You cannot get this knowledge from books, you cannot get this knowledge from books and what he said is only the externalities of what he knew and perceived.

And this high degree of knowledge is an abridgement of the path of prophecy. In other words just as you follow the Prophets in their outward teaching, this is the following of the Prophets in the inward realities and it is not prophecy because only the prophets have access to revelation but it is inspiration, it is ilm haam Sayyidina Umar had this. The Prophet salallahu 'alayhi wa sallamsaid the people that hear they have this inner hearing and Umar is one of them. Umar had this knowledge. The sahaba many of them had great access to this.

I mean this is what Allah says when Musa, when they came upon from Al-Khidr and he is not a Prophet. The majority of the ulema say that he is not a Prophet. Who was he? He says that he was a slave right. They found a servant from amongst Our servants. We gave him mercy, grace from Our presence and we taught him from Our presence. This is not book knowledge. Al Khidr had a different type of knowledge and then what did Musa say? The adaab of his question is amazing: May I follow you? First he is asking may I follow you in order that you might teach some of what you have been taught? He does not say all of what you have been taught. He is not assuming I can learn everything. Maybe can I follow you maybe so that you can teach me some of what you have been taught. You will not be able to be patient because knowledge is hard. This knowledge is knowledge that takes patience, it takes much perseverance, much practice. He said and how can you be patient about what you do not encompass in other words because you do not understand this how can you be patient to learn?

You will find me insha'Allah patient and I will not disobey you and that is the relationship between the student and the teacher. You have to be patient and then if the teacher. You have to be patient and then of the teacher if a true teacher and he tells you to do things then you have to do what they say for your own benefit. This is a path that will never be comprehended except by continuous practice. Tajiba is over and over again not one time. Tajibrhuh is to do it many times. People want to do it one time and then nothing happened. I did not get any benefit and Murrabul Hajj told me that even you do not worship Allah to have experiences. It is not why you do it. There are people who want to have experiences. I pray and nothing happens. I do this and nothing happens. I get up at night and nothing happens. If that is what you are trying to do then that is what you are doing the thing for whereas you should be doing it solely for the sake of Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala and he said if Allah gives you gifts out of that alhamdulillah because you are a servant of Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala and what cannot be acquired by taste will not be acquired by study and it is an obligation to believe in this and this is what is important to us. We should believe in this and its people so that you are not deprived of the emanations of their joy. At least you should believe in people so when you sit with them you are not deprived of the emanations of their joy so even if you are not one of them you are not deprived of their state. They are the people, the people that sit with them are not wretched. Just sitting with them is a blessing with those people. It is not making tazkiyah and saying we know we Allah's elect and chosen are not the Prophet said this is what I think about Him. We do not say anything Allahu Alim.

Everybody's under like one friend of mine said about Murrabul Hajj he said he is still under the microscope of examination in other words as long as he is alive he is susceptible to fitna, he is

susceptible toso we do not make any.....this is what we believe about them. This is our perception of them. That is tasdeek and this is what he is saying. Imam al-Ghazali said this is the least level of wilayah. It is the people that deny these people that are really in serious trouble really they are not well. If you sit with them you will know that they are not well and they are obsessed with attacking them and speaking ill of them. It is amazing, their hearts are just, they are not well and the fact that Allah has put them in, that is their state so do not be with those people. Do not listen to them. The people that talk about the awliyah are really not well. It is a bad state to be in. I once went to a dars and this man started attacking Abul-Hasan ibn Al-Shatir, why is he attacking him? Somebody the ummah has testified he was among the righteous so why do you want to put him amongst somebody else? Why risk that? It is a very strange thing to do but people do that but why do they do that? It is from the wonders of the heart. Those who do not see do not believe. They denied what they had no knowledge of nor did they have knowledge of its interpretation. That is what Allah says. They just denied it. They did not have knowledge of it. If they do not have any knowledge, if they have not reached guidance of this matter, they say these are just old lies. These are just lies that have been repeated before.

What he is saying is that this knowledge is a knowledge of tajribah. The beauty of that statement is what makes something a science is what Sir Karl Popper called its falsifiability something is scientific if it is replicable. If you cannot replicate it, you can prove it is not replicable so for instance if you freeze water like I learned water freezes at 32 degrees or 0 degree Celsius that is what you learn in school. Did you actually test that? No you just assumed it is must be true because they are telling you in school and it is in the books. That is taqlid. That is called taqlid. You just believe the authority because he is an authority and who am I to question his authority. I am just a humble insignificant bloke. He is a big professor.

So but if you take a thermometer and put it in the water and put the water into a freezer and you watch the water and it gets down to 32 degrees oh its ice. So you do the experiment yourself. There is a really nice book for people who have children. There is a book of replicating the great scientific experiments. A lot of the great experiments of human history are very simple to do like Newton when Newton refracted light and saw that were seven colours in refracted light. You just take a prism and put it in the sun and replicate it so this is also a replicable science. People that follow this science have the same experiences. They see the same thing and that is why somebody who has gone down that path and done it knows what to expect and also knows the pitfalls of it right.

That is what Ibn Ashar says he accompanies a teacher who knows the byways of this path. He knows the ways of the path and he will protect him from the pitfalls because if you go down a

road and somebody knows the road watch out the bend coming up. If you are driving watch out the bend coming up. There is a big hole on the left side. If somebody knows the road he can tell you but if you are driving 80 miles an hour and you do not know there is a big hole and then you turn and then your car, you lose control, you crash. That is why on the roads they have signs, don't they? They tell you soft shoulder ahead. Why? That is somebody who knew the road put the signs there for you. If you do not obey the signs you will endanger yourself so there is a tariqah and this is what the Prophets did.

They took the majority of humankind, the people that follow them. They are the real guides on the road but the shuykh are like those signs. That is what they are but the Prophets are the ones that put the signs. They are the ones that did the real work. The other ones are the lesser guide. They are not like the Prophets. The Prophet salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam said the scholars and this is not outward this is the ulema the people of inward and outward knowledge. They have the outward knowledge like Shaykh Abdullah has outward knowledge then he was taqwa, piety, he has done dhikr all his life, he gets up at night, he does all that work so he has the inward reality as well so has these two realities. So they are the inheritors of the Prophets so you are taking from the inheritance of the Prophets so you are taking from the inheritance of the prophecy. So you sit with them and it is like sitting with the Prophets. It is the closest thing we have to sitting with the Prophets. Allah does not deprive people of every generation of having that blessing of sitting with the people of knowledge so that is what he is saying so the people that deny that, well. They have denied the people before them so look at what happened to the oppressors, the people who denied. Amongst them are people who believed in him and amongst them are people who do not believe in Him and Allah knows best who are the mufsideen. He knows better who is guided.

And if they deny you said I have my actions, you have your actions,. I have my actions you have your actions I am free from what you do and you are free from what I do. I am not responsible for what you do and you are not responsible for what I do. So those who disbelieve, they say to those who believe if this really was good they would not have got it before us. This is hasad, for some people it is just hasad.

Do not think this is limited to the Prophets this is what he is saying, this is the whole point of this book, do not think this is limited to the Prophets and the awliya because the johar of the son of Adam of the children of Adam in the origin of its creation was made for this. We were created to know Allah this is what we are created for. We were created for marifah. What does Ibn Abbas

say in the tafsir, to know Allah. Know that there is no God but Allah. But it is not book knowledge. Christian, a Jew a Hindu anybody can learn tawheed. They can study a book and they can teach it. You can have a professor of aqeedah here from Cambridge and he can teach you our creed better than a lot of Muslims wAllahi. They have Orientalists that have better book knowledge of the creed than a lot of Muslims do even some of the ulema they have deeper knowledge. That is not what he is talking about. Like iron, the iron was created to make mirror of it so you can see the forms of the world in it. Unless it oxidises. Deoxidising it, removing that rust or it becomes dry and it needs to be polished or it needs to be reframed because it was broken so you have to recast it and just like that every heart if it is overwhelmed by desire and by disobedience it cannot reach this degree, this level. No child except that it is born on fitrah. The fitrah, it is open to this knowledge The child is open to this knowledge, born like that and then he caused them to witness over themselves am I not your Lord? And they said balaa. So they cannot say on the day of judgement, we had no knowledge of this so we have already witnessed it. It is just a reaffirmation of what we have already witnessed our Lord in the unseen world. We have already witnessed Him that he is One and that He is our Lord and so it is a reaffirmation in the dunya of this reality.

And also Bani Adam in their fitrah they believed in the Lordship of Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala just as Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala said this is the fitrah of Allah. This is the original nature that Allah has created the human being on. They are the children of Adam so they are the models. The Prophets are the models for human beings but they are human beings. I am a man just like you but I have this revelation coming to me. All those who sow the seeds will reap the fruit and if you set out on the path you will arrive. If you seek you will find. That is in the Gospel. If you seek, you will find. But seeking is only achieved through struggle. If you sit on a couch and somebody says what are you doing. They say I am seeking my provision.

You are not seeking your provision, you are sitting on a couch. If somebody is sitting there I am hungry, he does not get up to go to the kitchen and make himself something to eat. He is waiting for somebody else to do it. I am waiting for the wife to come home (laughs) seriously that is what people do. They do not want to struggle themselves, they want somebody else to struggle for them so then he says and also finding a truly knowledgeable person who has this knowledge, who has gone on this path and if you have these two things come together it is tawfiq from Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala. If you struggle with yourself and if you have the company of people who have struggled with themselves until they have overcome themselves until they have overcome themselves, that is tawfiq from Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala. Until he himself or she herself achieves this level.

This is the true joy and the true delight of the children of Adam is in knowledge of Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala. So know that the joy of everything and its delight and its repose is that which is in accordance with its nature. The joy of everything is that which is in accordance with its nature and the nature of everything is that for which it is created so you have to know if you want to know the nature of everything you have to know its tellos, why it was created, what is the purpose so if you look he says the delight of the eyes is in its witness of beautiful things. If you see a beautiful face the eye is delighted. If you see a beautiful face the eyes is delighted. Why? Because it was created to witness beauty, that is what it was created to do so its joy is in fulfilling the purpose of its creation. That is where its real joy is, that is why the eye if it seems something ugly there is no joy in it, why? Because it was not created for that, it was created to witness beauty. That is the purpose and that is why Isa alayhi wa sallam when they all looked at the dead carcass of the dog. Isa said how white its teeth because he was in that state of mushahadah so he looked at the beauty even in the ugliness. That is what he saw. He saw the beauty even in the ugliness.

The delight of the ear is in beautiful sounds. The ear delights in beautiful sounds because that is why it was created to hear good and beautiful things. It delights in wisdom, it delights in speech of the righteous, it delight in truth because that is what it was created for likewise the ugliest sounds is the sound of a donkey because the ear hears its ugly sound. And the rest of the limbs. The tongue can taste good things that is why it delights in sweet things, it delights in sour things. It delights in those things because it was created to do that. It has taste buds on it. People like salty things. They say lassi is sweet or salty. Some people they like sweet, some people like salty. They are all there but that is the joy of these things and touching and to touch something beautiful.

And the ladha of the hearts specifically. And the joy of the heart is in the knowledge of Allah because that is why the heart was created. That is why the heart was created but when people are sick they take joy in cacophonous sounds. When people are sick they like to see ugly things. There are people that enjoy seeing terror, watching war because they are sick, they are unwell. They are people that take pleasure in those things, in being cruel to people because they are sick and in the same way their hearts....it is not real ladha he is talking about sa'adat, all those are false.

Everything that the son of Adam knows once you have marifah of it you rejoice in it anything that you have knowledge of you rejoice in it, even the game of chess. If you know how to play

chess. You get excited. You are happy about it. And if he is prohibited from playing it. He does not want to leave it and he gets impatient, I really want to play. There are people that are obsessed with chess so he is saying if you have marifah of something you get a joy, that is the nature of the son of Adam even the foolish things, they get a joy. There are people that can do the most ridiculous things and they like to do them, they like to show you juggle ten plates and hold something on their nose really. There are people that can do that and they get a pleasure from that knowledge, that marifah, they have a knowledge of something.

And just like that if you have knowledge of Allah which is the knowledge of the greatest thing, everything you desire exists with Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala. Everything you desire exists with Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala. It is the highest, the truest thing, it is really and so for that reason he will be impatient without this witnessing, without this knowledge because this the joy of the heart is in knowledge. Everytime the knowledge is greater, the joy is greater. The greater knowledge you have the greater joy you have.

And like that if somebody knows the minister, he is so happy. I know the minister. There are people even Muslims they want to have their picture taken with the president. You go fill the gas tank up, the attendant comes, you do not say oh can I have my picture with you? To be next to the gas attendant. Why do you not do that? Because anyone can know the gas attendant but not everybody can know...and then they say oh see, they take the picture and put in their office. I am ashamed of (laughs). They put it in the office and people come in and oh yes I met the president. Why? Because he is happy. So if he knows the king he is just flying out of his skin. He knows the minister, it is a big thing but if he knows the king then it is like sheesh the minister. This is the way people are wAllahi it is amazing. It is pathetic. Nothing in existence is more honourable than Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala. There is no greater sharah because the honour of everything is because of Him.

The honour is because of Him and from Him. Every wondrous thing in this world that you wonder at and are amazed at it they are just traces of His power, His creative power. Everything that amazes you in this world is just a trace of Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala's creative power. There is no knowledge greater, more precious, more inestimable than His knowledge and there is no joy more vast than the joy of His knowledge and there is no presence like the presence of the divine. This the malah. All the joys of the desires of this world are connected with the nafs. They are all related to the ego. All of them. Everything that you have is related to the nafs and it all comes to an end with death. All the pleasures of this world they end with death. It does not

matter what you can think of and before you die. There are people that lose their appetites. They do even want to eat. They get to a certain age. Food does not even taste good any more. All the ladaat of dunya, they go. That is part of the end of life, the genitals and the stomach, the joys of those two, they go so he says but the joy of knowledge of Lordship is connected to the heart, the human consciousness, it does not end with death. All the pleasures of this world they end with death. It does not matter what you can think of and before you die. There are people that lose their appetite. They do not even want to eat. They get to a certain age. Food does not seem to taste good any more. All the ladaat of dunya, they go. That is part of the end of the life, the genitals and the stomach, the joys of those two, they go so he says but the joy of knowledge of Lordship is connected to the heart, the human consciousness, it does not end with death.

So all the joys end with death but the joy of knowledge with Allah does not end with death because all the joys in this world are connected to the senses and the heart is not of the senses. Consciousness is not of the senses. The joy is even greater when you die because the marifah expands and becomes purer and more knowledgeable. Its lights are greater because he leaves darkness and enters into light. He leaves the darkness of this world and enters into the light of the next world. Know that soul of the children of Adam is an abridgement of this world. It is muktashirah. That is what Imam Ali said you think that you are some insignificant mass no real significance to you and in you the entire cosmos exists and one of the extraordinary things about the human being and this is something that a nobel prize winner discovered was that if you measure the greatest things in this world and you measure the smallest things in the world, their sizes, the biggest and the smallest thing and you add them together and divide by two it is approximately the human being so we are literally we are the barzakh between the physical world, the subatomic world and the microcosm, we literally are the barzakh between these two things. This is where Allah has put human beings so we are an extraordinary creature. There is a beautiful book called the power of 10 if anyone has ever seen that, it just keeps taking things by the power of ten and going out of space into the skin. It starts with the human being sitting and they move out and move in. It shows that within us our vast worlds as vast as what is out of us. Inside of our bodies is a vastness that is not less significant than the vastness of the cosmos and that is who we are and that is why human being have been degraded. They have been made to believe they are insignificant that they are meaningless, pointless and therefore that are they are the lowest of their nature. Shahwa. That is all they are they for to eat drink, copulate, laugh, dance and be entertained until they die. That is all it is no human beings are something vast. That is what he is telling us. Every form that you see in the world there is the trace of it in the human being.

Look at the bones in your body are like the mountain. The bones in your body are like the mountain. The mountains hold the earth together. They are the p eg. You have these bones in your body. Your flesh is like the earth. Hair is beautiful. It adorns the person, just like the foliage adorns the earth. Your blood is like the rivers. Your lungs are like trees. Look at the bronchial tree and what do trees do? They breathe air, they breathe our carbon dioxide and they exhale oxygen. We breathe in oxygen and we exhale carbon dioxide. The trees are lungs and we are their lungs. So all of these things out there are in you and he says he could go on greater detail about this. And in your interior are all of the craftsmen of the world. The power in your digestion is like the cook. There is a cook that is mixing. There are ingredients. In Chinese medicine they call it soup of the stomach. It is a soup and just like you can ruin soup, your digestion can be ruined if you put the wrong ingredients in. You eat the wrong things. And what it is in the liver is like the baker. The liver is like the baker. It takes the glucagon and stores the glucagon and then when we need it, it releases it and it os all happening in your body. And in your intestines it is like the tanner, as it is coming through it takes the impurities out. That is what the tanner does, takes the impurities out and keeps what is good what is useful. And the thing that is making the milk white in the breast and the blood red is like the dyer. You have the dyer who makes the wool and dyes the wool that is in your body there are things that are giving colour, the haemoglobin in your body is like the dyer. So you have all these crafts. I could go on with details but you get the idea. My whole point is to tell you how much is in your interior that is going on.

All these worlds that are in you and they are all preoccupied with your service. They are at your service. They are all doing this work for what. To serve you. Your consciousness, that is all it is there for to serve your heart. They are all there to serve your consciousness. What is your consciousness there to serve? If each one of these has a purpose what is the purpose of the summation? You are meaningless. You do not have a purpose. There is no point to existence. That is what these ignorant people tell them now. All of this that is going on all marvels so he says all of this is in yourself and you are completely heedless of this. They never get rest. The heart is pumping thousands of gallons. If you look at what the heart does in a day. If you had to do the buckets you would be completely worn out. You could not do in a day what your heart does. Your physical body could not carry in a day what your heart is carrying in a day. You would be completely wiped out. Your breathing, your lungs. You are inhaling and exhaling. The digestion. If you had breakfast this morning, they are working down there. You are just sitting here. They are down there working. We need the gall bladder, send down more bile. Too much fat this morning. We need to break this down and then the pancreas: too much sugar. Emergency release insulin and insulin is going out grabbing the sugar getting it to the liver. The liver, too much sugar, we need to convert it into glycogen store it here, move that. It is all happening. It is a factory in there and there are all of these workers. You are sitting here in a complete state of heedlessness. How many blessings. He is completely showering you with blessings inwardly and

outwardly and we are in heedlessness, complete state of heedlessness. And you do not give gratitude to the one who gave you all of these blessings. How do you give gratitude? Shukr is to exert all of these blessings that all your Lord has given you to all your Lord intended for them. That is shukr, that is gratitude. This knowledge of all of these things is a vast knowledge. The knowledge of anatomy and physiology and it was a very important knowledge of Imam al-Ghazali. He actually wrote a book describing all the wonders of creation. It is considered a very important knowledge and like that the knowledge of medicine. Anybody who wants to look into himself and look at the wonders of God's creation, he needs to have the knowledge of three things from the divine attributes.

You should know the creator of the individual is Omnipotent and has complete capacity over perfection. He is not incapacitated by anything and that is Allah. There is no action in the world that is more wondrous than the creation of the human being. From a vile drop of fluid. There is nothing like it and the perception of the person in this wondrous form just as Allah subhanahu wa-ta'alaas Allah has made him in this wondrous form. He has fashioned him in this wondrous form just as Allah has said we have created the human being from a mixed fluid. We know now that it is a mixture of the male and female coming together and the genetic material is mixed. It is amazing. It is mutafin afjaaj. It is a singular with a plural which is very rare in Arabic. It was a problem for the mufasirruun. They talked about it. This is what happens. You get the sperm and the ovum come together. All of the genetic material they being together, it is vast. They come together and then We try him. It is a tribulation and you should know that His recreation of the first creation will be easier. If you think it is impossible you are insane because to do something a second time for us is easier a second time. For Allah, it is all the same but for us it is easier we should know if He created us the first time He can certainly do it the second time and now we have these fools who think they can clone human beings themselves. They think they can recreate a human being and they do not think Allah can recreate us.

Really they theoretically believe that the ability to recreate you from your genetic material is on the horizon. They believe that they are going to be able to do it and they do not believe that Allah can do it. The first is to know He has complete qudara and the second is to know Allah subhanahu wa-ta'ala that He has complete knowledge so He is Omnipotent and Omniscient because He encompasses all things. He could not make all of these wonders and marvels unless He had complete knowledge and the third that you should know that His kindness, grace, His mercy, His providence, His care is connected to engaged with all these things and there is no end to it and should see this in the flora and fauna and the minds and all this vast power that He has displayed in creating these beautiful forms and colours that we witness in the world. Because all

of these things are the key to knowing the divine attribute and this is an honourable knowledge. It is the knowledge of wonders of God's creation and to know the vastness of God, the majesty and magnificence of God subhanahu wa-ta'ala and His power. If you know this preciousness and this honour, this perfection, this beauty. Once you know the essence of the heart of consciousness that this essence is a precious essence. It was given to you and after that it was hidden from you this gift. If you do not seek out what has been hidden from you this treasure in your heart and you are heedless of it, you love, you forget, it is a greater tragedy and loss on the day of judgement for you.

Exert every effort in seeking it and leave the preoccupations of this world all of it because every honour what does not manifest in this world in the next world it will be joy without grief and perpetuity without cessation and power without incapacity and knowledge without ignorance and great beauty and majesty.

But today nothing is more lower than this thing. It is impoverished, neglected the honour is tomorrow. If this alchemy is thrust on the essence of the heart until he is free from being like animals and he achieved the ranks of angels so if he returns to the desires of this world, animals are preferable to him on the day of judgement because they go to dust and he goes to punishment and chastisement. We seek refuge in Allah from that and we seek refuge in Allah and we seek His protection. What a great master He is, what a great giver of victory.

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/Alchemy-of-Happiness#sthash.pAYVjkfN.dpuf>

Transcript for A Time for Introspection

Transcript Details

Event Name: A Time for Introspection

Transcript Author: A Time for Introspection

Description: Originally printed in Q News

Date Transcribed: 2/2/2002 12:00:00 AM

Original URL: http://www.masud.co.uk/ISLAM/misc/shhamza_sep11.htm

Transcript Text

On September 11th our lives changed forever. We witnessed an act of aggression that in many ways does not have a parallel in past or present times. There are several elements that make this act unique, from the use of civilian planes as weapons of mass destruction to the attack on the most widely recognised skyscrapers in the world. Nor have we ever witnessed the terrible indictment of Islam as having a part to play in such a heinous crime, writes Hamza Yusuf.

Muslims were seen rejoicing in some parts of the world in a display of what can only be called shamaatatul 'aadai', which is rejoicing at the calamities of ones' enemies. This is something explicitly prohibited in Islam and was never practiced by the Prophet of Mercy, upon him be prayers and peace. We have seen images since of American flags burning to further arouse the wrath of a nation filled with grief, confusion and anger. Again, Islam prohibits the burning of flags according to the explicit verse, "Do not curse [the idols] of those who call on other than Allah, thus causing them to curse Allah out of animosity [toward you] and without knowledge." This verse prohibits even the cursing of false gods because of the consequences. We have also seen image after image of Muslims with beards and turbans, who by all outward means look religious and pious - but are they really?

Unfortunately, the West does not know what every Muslim scholar knows; that the worst enemies of Islam are from within. The worst of these are the khawaarij who delude others by the deeply dyed religious exterior that they project. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said about

them, “When you see them pray you will consider your own prayers insignificant. They recite the Quran but it does not exceed the limits of their throat.” In other words, they don’t understand the true meanings. The outward religious appearance and character of the khawaarij deluded thousands in the past, and continues to delude people today. The Muslims should be aware that despite the khawaarij adherence to certain aspects of Islam, they are extremists of the worst type.

Our Prophet said, peace be upon him, “Beware of extremism in your religion.” Islam is the middle way between excess and neglect. Zealots are a plague upon religion. These extremists come in two types. The first is a reactionary extremist who falls far right of a centre-point. Reactionary extremists do not want any pluralism; they view the world in melodramatic, black and white, good and evil terms. They are good and anyone who opposes them is evil. From among the Muslims these are people who ‘excommunicate’ any Muslim who fails to share their interpretations of the Quran. They use takfir and character assassination as a tool for marginalising any criticism directed at them. They are used often by the Western media in order to scare simple people and cause them to believe that Muslims are insane. Unfortunately, our communities provide them with much fuel to fire their incendiary flames.

The second group are radical extremists, who while they are almost identical with the former group, differ in that they will use violence to further their cause. They are actually worse than the first. They believe like every nefarious secret society before them that ‘the end justifies the means.’ They see any act as acceptable if it will further their ‘cause.’ This is blatantly anti-Islamic for a number of reasons.

Firstly, Islam’s means must reflect its noble ends. Any means that does not embody the core truths and ethics of Islam is not from Islam and thus denounced as aberration. Secondly, Islam is not a secret society of conspirators who no one knows what they are planning. Islam declares openly its aims and objectives and these are recognised by good people everywhere as pure and congruent with their own wisdom and traditions. In the case of many of these extremists even the non-Muslims recognise that no religion of any weight could sanction the taking of innocent lives. The Quran says that the Torah and the Gospel have guidance and light and that the Quran came to fulfil these prior dispensations. Good Christians and Jews who believe in God and live ethically upright lives have no frame of reference for such acts, so how could these acts be from Islam, which confirms what has come before it?

Thirdly, they are invariably people who have never taken a true spiritual path to God and nor have they studied the humanities. I can almost guarantee that you will not find a scholar of poetry among the whole vile lot of these people. They have no true knowledge of Arabian culture, which is centred in the idea of futuwwa; a word akin to the western word chivalry. The terrorists posing as journalists who killed Ahmad Shah Masuud were cowards of the worst type. Killing themselves was not bravery but stupidity, but killing one's enemy in such a way is the worst form of treachery and the Arabs have many poems denouncing such type of people.

Our real situation is this: we Muslims have lost theologically sound understanding of our teaching. Islam has been hijacked by a discourse of anger and the rhetoric of rage. We have allowed for too long our mimbars to become bully pulpits in which people with often recognisable psychopathology use anger - a very powerful emotion - to rile Muslims up, only to leave them feeling bitter and spiteful towards people who in the most part are completely unaware of the conditions in the Muslim world, or the oppressive assaults of some Western countries on Muslim peoples. We have lost our bearings because we have lost our theology. We have almost no theologians in the entire Muslim world. The study of kalaam, once the hallmark of our intellectual tradition, has been reduced to memorizing 144 lines of al-Jawhara and a good commentary to study it, at best.

The reality is we are an Umma that no longer realises that Allah is the power behind all power; that it is Allah who subjugates one people to another; that He gives dominion to whom He pleases and He takes it away from whom He pleases. Our understanding of tawhid has fallen into such disarray that we can no longer introspect when afflictions befall us and then wonder in amazement at why the Americans seem incapable of introspection. Indeed, I personally attended a memorial service in San Francisco with over 30,000 people and the Reverend Amos Brown said in no uncertain terms that America must ask herself what she has done either wittingly or unwittingly to incur the wrath and hate of people around the world. Muslims on the other hand, generally prefer to attack the West as the sole reason for their problems when the truth is we are bankrupt as a religious community and our spiritual bankruptcy has led to our inability to even deliver the message of Islam to Westerners in a time when they were giving us platforms to do so.

It is ironic that the Western media while producing many vile programs on Islam has also produced and aired material of the highest quality with a high level of accuracy only to be vilified by Muslims because it was not good enough. Where is our media? Where are our

spokespeople? Where are our scholars? Where are our literary figures? The truth is we don't have any - and so instead of looking inward and asking painful questions such as why we don't have such things and such people, we take the simple way out by attacking people whom Allah tells us will do mean things, say bad things and plot against us. And always when we are warned we are told to be patient, to work for the good, to trust in Allah, to return to Allah, to implement our deen.

Conspiracy or not, we are to blame for the terrible backlash against Muslims. The simple reason is that when a crazy Christian does something terrible, everyone in the West knows it is the actions of a mad man because they have some knowledge of the core beliefs and ethics of Christianity. When a mad Muslim does something evil or foolish they assume it is from the religion of Islam, not because they hate us but because they have never been told by a Muslim what the teachings of Islam are all about.

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/A-Time-for-Introspection#sthash.xKt5DVI7.dpuf>

Transcript for 17 Benefits of Tribulation

Transcript Details

Event Name: 17 Benefits of Tribulation

Transcript Author:

Description:

Date Transcribed: 1/1/1900 12:00:00 AM

Original URL:

The Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace, was someone who went through unparalleled hardship, and yet he never allowed any difficulties to perturb him. In one very powerful and condensed session, Hamza Yusuf explains why. Commenting on the treatise of the seventh century scholar Izz ibn Abdus-Salam, he reveals 17 benefits of tribulations for those who would see them. Not only will this lecture completely transform your outlook on calamities, but it will also leave you in total awe of Allah's magnanimity and infinite mercy.

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

I wanted to go over a booklet that was written by a man known as sultan al ulema, the sultan of the scholars, Izzideen Abdul Aziz Abdus Salaam Sulami. He died in 660. He lived in Egypt and he was known also to have mastered the two madhabs which is rare, in the history of Islam, in fact I think he is the only person who really has that maqam. He wrote this book and called it “The Book of Calamities, Tribulations, Hardships and Disasters or the Benefits of Tribulations and Tests”. He wrote it actually to point out all the tests, the benefits that come from having tribulation in your life and one of the aspects of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam), one of the most extraordinary aspects of the Prophet’s (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) life is that he never allowed tribulations to disquiet him, in other words he never allowed any difficulties that he faced or hardships to perturb him oo put him in a state of turbulence.

The word in Arabic for somebody who has forbearance is called halim. The word halim is a word that the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was described as “he had more forebearance than anybody else” that is a description. Now the word for intellect is hilm. That is one of the words for intellect, hilm.

One of the things they accused the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) of was “he causes us to lose our intellects or to make us look like fools” because safia is the opposite of halim”. So the

man of intellect is somebody who has hilm. The man without intellect is somebody who has safaha. Safaha is a lightness, there is no stability because what intellect should do is it should stabilise you and that is why the halim is somebody who does not get disquieted, he does not get perturbed in life.

Now what is interesting about disquietude is that the word for dreamer is halim. The word for a person who is dreaming is ha'lum. Now why do you think that the word for somebody who does not get perturbed is halim and the word for a dreamer is ha'lum? Ahlam is intellect but it is also dreams. In Surah Yusuf, the dreams were called empty dreams. Why do you think there is a connection between hilm and dream and intellect? It is hard to dream when someone is agitating you. Dreams need a state of quietude in order for you to sleep.

Now the word for nipple is halama and a child when they are at the nipple what happens to their state? What does the mother do when the child is in a perturbed state? The infant. She gives it the breast which is called halama. What happens to the child? It goes into a state of complete quietude and relaxation.

Now it is not interesting that milk and knowledge are from the same source and that is why when Sayyidina Umar in the sound hadith saw a dream which the Prophet's (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) milk was coming out of his fingers and Sayyidina Umar was drinking it. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said al ilm it is knowledge, knowledge.

So isn't it interesting that ghawiyah which means to go astray means the inability to digest milk. In Arabic, you can look these up in Arabic dictionary. Ghawiyah which is to go astray the root of it means the inability to digest milk.

Because our first stage is to get through the two years and in the Western developmental and that call it that first crisis is trust vs mistrust. That is what the child needs to realise that they are in a safe environment and if they are not given milk, they are neglected by their mother, if they are mistreated, they do not get through that first developmental stage and then every stage after that is a disaster. According to Eriksson, that is a theory in developmental psychology but my point of bringing that up is that trust vs mistrust is related to whether or not the mother removes the disquietude of the child or not because that is the key thing that the mother has to do. The cry of the baby there is a reason that babies cry and if you grew up in this country in the sixties, there was a character called Dr Spock and they are always giving new theories about how to raise children but one of the theories in the fifties was mothers should ignore the cry of the child and regulate the milk according to fixed times which is complete insanity but that is what they did now look at the society out there.

So the halim the person who is the halim is a person who in the face of tribulation whether it is a person or whether it is a circumstance they do not lose their cool. They do not become perturbed and this is the hallmark of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) in terms of his behaviour with people and with circumstances is that for instance he is described as whenever people would speak ill to him he would return with, the Quran says give a had turn, repay it with a good turn. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) when he was migrating from Makkah to Madinah he according to the narration Abu Bakr was perturbed, he was troubled and he would look at the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) would even though Suraqah ibn Malik was right behind them. Abu Bakr was worried not about himself. He was worried about the messenger of Allah. He was in an act of ibadah but the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was in a state of tranquillity. He was reciting the Quran, unperturbed.

When they were in the cave and Abu Bakr was very nervous because right outside were the Quraysh literally right outside the cave and the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was in a complete unperturbed state. In battles they said the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam), they used to hide behind him some of the people when it got difficult.

So the famous story of the Jews that came to the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and purposely upset him in order to elicit a response and it was Umar who got very angry and the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was completed unperturbed even though he was insulted by this man. The man said he had seen all the characteristics of prophecy except for one hilm, and he needed to test that so he purposely evoked a negative response but did not get it from the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) so we know that he had hilm or forbearance.

So one of the things about people that are disconnected from Allah is that they get completely disquieted whenever things get difficult. It is a sign of weak iman. People whose iman is weak when they lose the slightest thing you can see them disquieted, perturbed.

One of the things that we are increasingly becoming incapable of is listening to each other, just talk, human beings without getting disquieted. So people cannot have civil arguments, they cannot have discussions because once we start talking I get heated, you elicit a response from me like there was a physician in India who used to treat people with ruqyah and one of these modern physicians thought he was completely insane and when he started arguing with him about this, he said “how do you think that words can affect anything, you need to give people antibiotics and you need to give them things that will change their states” so the other physician who believed in ruqyah called him a donkey. He got really angry and then called him a pig and he was about to kill him. He said “two words I said to you and look at how they have changed your state. You are

red and ready to kill me” because of two words so words have a power to elicit responses from us.

And so what hilm is, is the ability to not allow your button to be pushed and it really is one of the gifts of Islam if people take it seriously. It is hard to do and we are all working at it to some degree. People get better at it than others but it takes a great deal of effort and it does not stop. It gets finer and finer but removing resentment from the heart is a really difficult thing, hasad, all these diseases of the heart.

So this book he wrote as a way of helping people to understand what tribulations really are because one of the reasons we get disquieted about difficulties is that we do not understand what the wisdom of the difficulty is from Allah. That is one of the real problems so when Allah gives you a difficult situation. If you believe in Allah the difference between you and someone who does not believe in Allah is that you will derive benefit from that condition.

Now one of the beauties of the creation and for me one of the greatest proofs for the existence of God that if you do not believe in God you will live in a world filled with God but if you disbelieve in God you will constantly be re-affirmed in your disbelief and that is why atheists cannot understand people that believe in God and people that believe in God cannot understand atheists because both of them are seeking a proof for their belief. They really are and that is one of the meanings I think of the hadith “I am in the opinion of my servant” so if my servant thinks I am nothing, that is what he finds.

Allah is in the understanding of the believer so if you believe Allah is with you, Allah is with you. If you do not believe He is with you, He is not with you and that is why despair is haraam in every Abrahamic tradition. It is haraam and in Catholicism it is the unforgiven unpardonable sin in Catholicism to despair from the mercy of God. It is actually the one thing that is not forgiven. That is Iblees, that is his disease, he despaired so he wants everybody else to despair so part of the game that is being played in the world is to make everybody think that it is all horrible and whenever you talk to people that do not believe in God or people in this age in particular, what do they say to you? Look around you, how can you believe in God? Well that is my whole point I am looking around, how can I not believe in God? So where is the problem? The problem is in what they call evil and this is what ultimately every argument against the existence of God rests upon.

It rests upon what they call the problem of evil and that is why if somebody tells you they do not believe in God what you should ask them to do is to explain to me what your definition of God is because we might not believe in the same thing in other words I might agree with you that I do not believe in that thing because one of the things that they have done is that they are trapped in a

Christian Manichean world view which is where good and evil are both creations of Allah. See the Christians cannot explain evil because they say God is all good and God is all powerful. Well if God is all good and all powerful how do we explain evil in the world? Because if He is all good He would not create evil and if He was all powerful He would remove it from the world. This is what they call the problem of evil in philosophy. That is the argument.

That is ultimately what atheists have a problem with so one of the benefits of this is we had scholars that looked at tribulations and said “never think something is evil because you do not know”. Now on the one hand we have a shariah that says killing is evil right so if somebody kills another person unjustly that is evil the person should be punished or forgiven or whatever is done but it is a wrong action that needs to be redressed so shariah is something we have to live with. The law that Allah has given is just like here in this society we have laws many of them are incongruous with our system of law and that is what Raghav il Misbahani calls Al Adal al Mutaqah which are shared by Muslims and non Muslims and then you have what is called Al Adal al Muqayyadah which relates to the shariah or the sacred law that a specific Prophet has brought and that adal can actually change, it can actually change but Adal al Mutaqah, it is wrong to take somebody else’s property. Everybody agrees on that and that is the basis of entering into transactions with non Muslims and that is why Muslims can transact with non Muslims because if we did not have a shared understanding of justice we could not communicate but every non Muslim that has got any brains at all will agree with us on many basic points and this is how it is capable for Muslims and non Muslims to live together based on those shared things.

There are other things where we disagree and then the shariah has ways of dealing with that. In a Muslim society even, non Muslims are allowed to do things that Muslims are not allowed to do.

So he begins this book Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem, in the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Every Muslim traditionally began their book with Bismillah or Alhamdulillah and that was because the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said that anything that begins without bismillah is cut off from barakah so it is a way of maintaining barakah.

The shaykh and shaykh in Arabic has several meanings one of them is simple just an old man, he gets grey hairs and shaykh also means the head of a tribe, it can be somebody who has wealth, it can mean a dignified person but here it is used to signify somebody who has wisdom and because usually wisdom comes with old age.

Imam is a paragon, somebody that embodies something. Ummah is a group of people that are moving towards the same object, that is what an ummah is. It is a people that are bound together

by the same goal and that is why the ummah of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) has the same goal to get to paradise.

Then the mother obviously she is the umm which is related to the same root word. Hujjat al Islam. Hujjah is a proof and that is a level a degree that certain scholars reach when they become like Imam al Ghazali who was the famous Hujjat al islam, becomes a proof for the truth of Islam. That that person has become, the fact that they exist is a proof that Islam is true.

Mutamada Anam the one that that all of the creatures depend upon. Anam generally means the things that sleep but it also means the ins and the jinn.

Imam at-Tabari says that He placed the earth for the anam that it means all the living creatures, things that sleep and also the ulema are of benefit to the creatures because they defend their rights, creatures have rights, trees have rights. This is a modern argument in the West whether creation has legal standing or not. This is an argument that environmentalists lawyers have brought up whereas the Muslims dealt with these things.

His name is Abu Muhammad Abzul Aziz ibn Abdus Salaam. He was Shafi but he also mastered the Maliki madhab and then he says may Allah benefit the Muslims by him. Even today 800 years after he wrote this book we are here in California benefiting by his words and so the dua was answered. May we benefit by this imam and all the believers. May Allah forgive us and him and all the believers.

Calamities and tests and tribulations and distasters have different benefits based upon the different ranks of people. This is an important idea. Rutbah is a rank, it is used in modern Arabic in military rank. Rutub are the ranks that people are in relation to Allah. So just as you have in the military. "Nobody knows the armies of your Lord except Allah so Allah has junood". Now people have different ranks, you have Generals, you have Colonels and then within that you have ranks and then you have Major and Captains and Lieutenants, Sergeants and Corporals. Now in the people of thahir the people actually wear uniform to let them know what their ranks are.

In Islam those ranks are hidden. You do not know the stations of people with Allah. It is something that Allah has hidden. One of the ulema said that Allah hid three things in three things. He hid His contentment in His obedience so in other words you never know what Allah will accept from you. Allah might not accept a great thing you did that was an act of obedience but He might accept a small thing like the prostitute who was forgiven for giving a dog water. That is the reason she was forgiven for giving a dog water. So Allah has hidden His contentment in obedience.

And He hid his wrath in His disobedience so the woman who locked up the cat and went to hell for locking up a cat. That was the thing, obviously that was an indication of her state. She was obviously a cruel woman because if you do not have compassion with animals it is a sign of cruelty and in our societies we know that children that are abusive to animals and torture animals when they are young often end up becoming very abusive when they are old so there is a relationship between kindness to animals and kindness towards humans.

That is one of the reason why every Prophet was a shepherd because they learned to be gentle to animals because that is a transitional phase into being...because if you are kind to animals you should certainly seem that you would be kind to humans. We are at the highest of that chain. Hierarchy of beings. People say you would not treat a dog like that, like why are you treating me like that? Well because dogs are faithful and you were unfaithful.

So he says benefits are based on the differences of the ranks of people. For some people a tribulation removes wrongs. Imam al Ghazali says there are wrongs in this world that are only removed by depression. If you are wondering why people get depressed, people get depressed from dunooob. Also the soul you see I do not care what anybody says about alternative lifestyles and all the people out there doing.....I guarantee you people have trouble in their soul, you can numb it. You can pre-occupy yourself, you can entertain yourself, you can do all these things to not deal with the soul's anguish but you cannot remove the anguish of the soul. It is not possible which is Karl Marx said "Religion is the opium of the masses". Abdul Hakim Winter said "but opium is the religion of the masses". That is the idol, escape from reality. That is what they are worshipping because they will do anything for that idol. All they are trying to do is to numb the pain of existence but the existence is painful because you are not fulfilling your function. When you do not fulfil your function there is always trouble.

Anytime anything in the body is not fulfilling its function what is the first sign to let you know that you should go to the doctor? Pain, there is some type of disquietude in the body to let you know it is not fulfilling its function. So if suddenly you have got the pain in your liver and you go and he says you have got hepatitis. That pain is to let you know that the function has been disrupted.

The same is true for the soul. If you are not fulfilling your function which is to worship Allah, testify to His unity and to behave accordingly then you will be in pain and suffering until you come into accordance and that is a gift from Allah in the same way that pain, signs and symptoms are gifts for people so they can go to a physician and get well. If there were not signs and symptoms, that is why hypertension is such a dangerous disease because people can walk around and not feel any discomfort from hypertension and they can die from it.

The pain in the soul is there but people will do things and that is what people do. Kufr is essentially covering up. Now if you get a headache and you go and take Tylenol, you are not getting rid of the headache, you are suppressing the symptoms. So if you are sick in your soul from your kufr and you go and you do things in order to remove the pain of the kufr you are just covering up more and that is why it is darknesses covering darknesses and you just keep covering up more and more until that person is so diseased that it is a hopeless case unless Allah intervenes. That is what happens to people and so the ranks of people differ now the Prophets upon them all be peace, the Prophets have tribulation not to remove their wrongs but to elevate their rank. It is not to remove their wrongs and that is the case of some of the saliheen as well. They are moving up in degrees. The people of the greatest tribulation are the Prophets and then those closest to them and then those closest to them. It is like that.

Now obviously you can see people in the world and you look at them and you see tribulation like there are non Muslims and you see the tribulations they are in and you wonder about that. Well according to Ibn Abbas, he said that there is no tribulation that does not have a tribulation that could not be worse than it. So it is difficult to assess what really is happening when you look at people but this is one of the problems in religion is suffering in the world and the different degrees of tribulation out there and this is the way that we view tribulation for the believer. For people outside of Islam there is a whole other set of rules working because when you know things you have an accountability that is not included when you do not know things. One of the things that Sayyidina Umar said that they noticed about Islam is when they entered into Islam and they would do something wrong they would see an immediate effect of that whereas they never saw it in the jahiliyah and that was because of their maqam with Allah.

Once the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was walking and there was a young man who saw a woman and he was looking at the woman he ran into the wall. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said that was his removal of the wrong that it happened immediately. So that was actually a blessing to have that wrong removed. Now there is another hadith where the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) went to a man that was completely devastated. He was dying, he was in his bed, flesh and bone and completely wasted. He said what did you ask Allah? He said I asked Him to purify me of all my sins and he said do not ask Allah for that because you cannot take it but ask him for afiyah for well being, do not ask him for that because you do not want that. You do not want Allah to purify your sins by forgiveness. That is what we want and that is why sincere tawbah is what we need. We need a sincere tawbah to Allah. We do not want to have to do all these things and get these things happening to us because of the wrongs that we are doing. But that is what happens with the people the saaliheen is that they get to a point where they are content with what is happening. It is no longer painful because they are in such a state.

A woman one of the saalihs was walking and she stumbled and hurt her leg. She began to laugh and somebody thought she was crazy and said are you majnoon? She said no I fell and when the pain came I remembered the hadith where the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said a believer does not get a thorn in his foot except it removed wrongs and the sweetness of my wrongs being removed overwhelmed my pain. She was actually alhamdulillah. That is iman, those are spiritual endorphins kicking in. There are spiritual endorphins, all those things are mithal, what you see in the world is just a metaphor for the unseen world. They have opium. There is spiritual opium. There are things that can put out your pain. When one of the sahaba had an arrow, they said wait until he goes into prayer to remove it. You think these are stories? You think these are things that people like made up? Like fairy tales and things like that. Seriously these are not made up stories. These are things that people witnessed with their own eyes and they removed the arrow during his prayer because he could not feel it.

I broke this arm severely, I had a fracture on my wrist and it is one of the worst kinds you can get and they gave me something called Fentanyl. They could have broken my leg, I would not have cared because of that drug. It is a very short lasting drug the half life is very quick and it is a morphine derivative.

But once they had given me the Fentanyl, he could have done anything. He took it and pulled it down and re-set it. I did not feel anything. I was in complete bliss from a drug and that is just a chemical reaction happening in the brain. It is all it is. So do not think those are stories. Those things are real. People go into those states with Allah where they do not feel pain, they actually feel delight. That is not something that you should ask for, let me delight in my calamities., you should ask Allah for afiyah but you should recognise that when the calamities come they come for a deep wisdom.

So he says the first benefit you realise is the power of Lordship over you. You realise that Allah is Rabb and you are marboob and the nature of Lordship is that Lordship Lords over you and this is why when tribulations come to you “la hawla wa la quwatta illah billah”, “Inna lillahi wa inna ilahi rajiun”. There are things that you can control. In my environment here there are things that I can control. I am thirsty, I have a cup, Allah has given me will, Bismillah, I can drink, I can quench my thirst, Allah has given me that but He can take it away. Allah can not only remove the power of motion. Guillain-Barre, has anyone ever seen someone with Guillain-Barre, the virus where they have to be on ventilators, they cannot move. Healthy young people in their twenties get afflicted with this disease. One of the miracles of that is sometimes they actually recover and get back their motion so it is like this period where Allah removes it all and then gives it back to them but then there are other times when do not get it back and that is when they see reality because this is the illusion. The illusion is I am free, I am independent, I can do whatever I want, I mean we have got 6 billion people walking around this planet under that

delusion but when the calamity comes suddenly that delusion is taken away and that is why Lee Attwater, does anybody remember that name? Lee Attwater, he was the republican head of the election committee, he basically destroyed Dukakis when Dukakis ran for democratic president, Lee Attwater wrote an extraordinary, and it is worth reading. It is a confessional that he wrote right before he died because at the age of 39 and this was a man who by dunya standards in this society had it all. That is what they said about him, he was young, handsome, wealthy, powerful, he had it all. He was a Machiavellian politician that basically destroyed people's lives.

He said he based his life on Machiavelli's book "The Prince" that was his bible and then at the age of 39 he got a tumour in the brain and all he wanted to do was to ask forgiveness of all the people that he had destroyed and he wrote it. It is really worth reading what he wrote because he said suddenly he realised and that is what it takes for some people, that is what it takes to learn that lesson. So learning that Allah is Lord and that He overpowers His servants.

The second benefit is that you realise your abject servanthood and your complete state of resignation and brokenness before the will and power of Allah and to this the words of God indicate when He said "those who when an affliction strikes them they say surely to God do we belong to Him we return". They finally admit that they are in the dominion, they admit when the calamity comes that they are in the dominion of God. We belong to God in other words if I take something, if I take this, if I owned it and took it and threw it out and you said you cannot do that. Why can't I do that? This is mine, I own it and can do whatever I want with it. That is the nature of property. Property is that the one who owns it has the right to do what he wills with it, that is the nature of property. If you do not have that quality of possession then it is not really your property.

Now because the dunya is not our property, we cannot do whatever we want with it can we? But we understand the concept of property. This world is the dominion of God and therefore God can do whatever He wants with it. If I have a book and I burn it and you say to me you cannot do that, yes I can, it is my book and I want to burn it. You should not burn books, maybe I should not but I can and you cannot stop me by law. So if a person asks you why did you burn the book, because there are mistakes in it, oh I do not realise. Now I have explained myself and now it makes sense to you. This is Musa and al Khidr right in that story of Al Kahf which is the story of the problem of evil because Musa is looking with the eye of the outward and everything he sees is wrong. But when it is explained to him by a servant who is given knowledge by Allah's, suddenly Musa is saying I didn't realise, now I have an explanation.

What happens on Yaum ul Qiyammah? Allah tells us in the Quran, He explains it all to us, and then everybody will say now it makes sense. The difference between the believer and the kafir is in this world we are saying we know it makes sense. The difference between the believers and

the kafir is in this world we are willing to wait until the day of judgment to have it explained because we trust Allah. They are saying no, it is wrong. How do you know? You do not have all the information, you cannot make a judgment about a thing unless you completely understand that thing “to judge a thing is only one aspect of conceptualising the entirety of that thing”. It is a principle in logic and that is why a judge has to know all the facts. If you prejudge it is called prejudice and it is considered to be a moral vice to be prejudiced so we cannot prejudge God. We do not have that right to do that, we cannot prejudge Allah because Allah is the One who knows all things “and as for you, you have only been given a small amount of knowledge”.

On the way here I was talking with a physician in the car and one of the things he said was he was talking with a nephrologist, one of his anatomy professors said we do not even know how we urinate, we do not really understand it. We can explain to you what we know but why it is happening, how this whole thing is working, how the kidneys are doing all this, we do not really understand it. I responded by saying Imam al Ghazali was asked where is God? Imam Ghazali wrote a poem back to him, and in the poem he said “you do not even know how you drink water and how you urinate”. What is happening in between? You do not know your co-ordinates in the universe, how can you know where God is?

I love these maps in astronomy books where they show our galaxy and they say you are here. In astronomy books they have the milky way and then they say you are here. Give me those co-ordinates. Seriously do you know what co-ordinates are based on? Co-ordinate system, x, y, z. You have to have a system, here what we have are cardinal points which do not even exist in reality because cardinal points are experiential. It is all flat earth. Cardinal points are all based on pre-copernican theories about the universe but that is all we have got.

So if you ask for my co-ordinates here in California, it is based on arbitrary points of reference, it is like Greenwich. Who chose Greenwich? The English happened to be the most powerful people at the time so it was Greenwich. He could have been Istanbul. It is arbitrary. You do not know where you are in the universe, how do you know where God is? But this is the ignorance of man because man is in a delusional state and the problem with delusions, this is the most troubling thing for me as a person who understands this intellectually. The problem with delusion is nobody who is deluded sees their delusion. That is the problem of delusion you do not understand that you are deluded. Arrogant people are often completely oblivious to their ignorance. They do not realise that they are being arrogant but they see themselves as better than you and that is where the arrogance comes from and to see themselves as better than you is a delusional state because in reality they do not know whether they are better than you, they might be but they do not know.

See you did not ask me what were the other things, there was one thing that I left out of the three things. That just reminded me of that.

He has hidden his awliya amongst His servants and the frightening thing about this it might even be a non muslim. That is the amazing thing about it because Imam Qurtabi said that Sayyidina Umar was beloved to God when he was in Makkah prostrating to idols. So you do not know, you could meet a person and he could be better than you.

That is why Habib Umar told one of the students that was in Yemen “when you go to America, if you want to call Americans to Islam never call anybody, talk to them about Islam except that you assume he is better than you”. Not that he is lower than you, that he is actually better than you. That methodology is what spread Islam all over the world because what he said was that you now know the truth and so any disobedience you do you have no excuse for whereas as long as he is in a state of ignorance it might be an excuse with his Lord until the message comes to him because we believe that people that have not been given a message are forgiven.

So then he says they admit they are His dominion and His servants and ultimately they must return to His judgment and decree and to His planning and management and to His fate and measuring out. They have no place of refuge from Him and no way out.

The third benefit of calamities is sincerity to Allah because one has no place of return in putting off or defending against the calamities except to Him. So it makes you sincere. The mukhlis is the one that calls on God without any shirk. So if you realise you have no other place. They realised that they had no place of refuge from Him except to Him. That state is a great gift from Allah because it puts you in a state of ikhlas. One of the ulema said that one moment of ikhlas in this world is enough to save a person, just to be in a state of ikhlas with Allah. So that is a great gift that calamity except upon Allah, Allah says “if Allah afflicts you with some harm there is no remover of that harm except Allah, except Him”.

When they get on a boat and there is turbulence and waves, suddenly they are calling Allah sincerely. These are people that are in a bad state but Allah is saying in that state they are mukhlisoon because when the calamities come....so that is a benefit of calamities.

How many times wAllahi you ask yourselves, everyone of you right now, you ask yourselves how many times has a calamity afflicted you and it led to the state where you really felt You are the only one who can help me in this. That is how I became Muslim wAllahi. I remember very clearly when I was 17 years old, I had an incredible tribulation and I remember the night. I was in a car and I will never forget that night where I know I called on Allah with absolute sincerity. I remember it very clearly and that prayer got answered. That is the beauty, because that is the

ism'alam. If you call on Allah that is the ism'alam, the greatest name is the name that has no partnerships with it.

The fourth benefit is that he returns to Allah and is suddenly fervent in his desire of his Lord so that is a benefit. Allah says when a harm afflicts the human he calls on his Lord returning back to Him, to His Lord.

The fifth one that it leads to a humbled state before God and prayers that you are calling on Allah. When the harm afflicts a person, He calls on Us. There is a hadith that Allah afflicts the people He loves just to hear them call on Him. SubhanAllah. It is only a short time, if you keep it in perspective. It is just like the dentist, it is only going to hurt for a second but he is doing it for your benefit and that is why you let him do it. It is true or not true? Somebody when they are pulling out the sliver you know this is just going to hurt for a second, ok go ahead. It is over that is what you say when you do something to the child get a sliver out, it is just for a second and then they are crying crying. It is over, it is over then you hug them and everything is alright and that is the thing about dunya it is just.....we are getting the tooth pulled out. 70-80 years maximum but if you relate it to infinity, to infinity, it is cancelled out so stop complaining. Really, just sit back and relax.

You know what it is like, I have seen this with my own child and you can do this, don't do this! Take the child, I do not want to be responsible, it is America, they sue you for stuff like this. If you take a child and you throw the child up there is a point where you see this, they go into this state of complete panic and then when they come back to your arms they are laughing. That is dunya, I guarantee you, that moment, that is your life, you came from God and you are going back to God and there is just a moment when you are in a complete state of panic but just relax, you are in good hands. Just relax.

The Moroccans say relax the mind and learn to swim, seriously relax the mind. Do you remember when you first learned to swim? I remember, I will never forget it. I got placed on my back, the person told me relax completely. I was scared to death. Relax completely? What are you talking about? I am going to drown. No you are going to float. Relax it was frightening in the beginning but once you learn to relax suddenly you are floating and everything is fine. That is dunya. You just have to relax, we are in the ocean of dunya and we need to just float, keep afloat, do not drown. They are all drowning out there because the person who drowns, they come up and they are in a state of....if they would just relax, they would not drown but the panic is causing them to drown and that is what is happening with all these people out there. It is the panic. "Human beings are created in a state of anxiety, when any harm afflicts they panic and when good comes they withhold, they do not want to share it with anybody except the people of

prayer”. They are in a different state and that is the people we want to be from, the people who are exempted from that other state because that trust in Allah is what saves you.

Allah says they call to him, rather to Him may your call be and He will remove what you are calling him for, to remove the calamity if he desires. So that is one of the benefits. “Say who will save you from the darkneses of the land and the sea when you call Him, abased and humbled, in fear and in concealment”.

The sixth benefit is that you are forbearing to the One who has afflicted you. Allah says in the Quran “Ibrahim was someone who had compassion for other people, he felt compassion”. Halim is the gentleness. “We gave them good tidings of Ismail”. Young boy, a forbearing boy. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said “you have two qualities that Allah loves: forbearing and deliberation”. There is a difference in the rankings of forbearance based upon the differences of the calamities in their enormities and in their severity, whether they are great or small. A forbearance shown when there is a great calamity is much greater than any other type of forbearance so that is one of the great blessings is the ability to show forbearance because it is a gift from Allah.

The seventh one is that you can forgive them so it is not just having forbearance but you actually forgive them and you get one of the greatest rewards is forgiving people who have done you a wrong. Allah says “those who forgive people, Allah loves those people”. “The one who pardons and who rectifies, his reward is with Allah”. When you forgive people for great calamities, it is better than any other forgiveness. See if you have family members that cause you problems, you have to forgive them for the sake of Allah. Don't do it for them, do it for Allah. See one of the things that people do, if you get angry and you leave, you run out of the room and then you do not talk to that person the more you delay that time the deeper it festers. It is like a boil. If you immediately go, seriously I got upset with somebody, I took a shower and then just went and asked their forgiveness and I was not the wrongdoer. The thing can be healed, if you do not do that, it becomes more and more difficult as times goes on, it festers. Then pride comes in. Shaytan says it is not your fault, you didn't do it. He should be the one asking for forgiveness of you, who does he think he is? Don't worry about who he thinks he is, worry about who you think you are, that is the problem. The problem with the world is who we think we are so asking forgiveness of people is a great blessing from Allah.

The eighth one is to be patient during the tribulation “Allah is with the patient ones” so when you show patience it is a great blessing. To wait for an opening from Allah is one of the greatest acts of ibadah. There are Muslims you see, if you tell them to be patient they say how long do we have to be patient. There is this kind of thing we have been patient, that is not patience. You cannot call a donkey patient in Arabic. It does not work because patience is based on

understanding. You can bear things, they just bear it. Patience is difference. Patience has ihtisab which is where you actually reckon with your Lord a reward, you are believing there is a reward coming from being patient. This brings on the muhabbah of Allah, the love of Allah and also the abundant reward. Allah loves the patient ones, so by being patient you are incurring the love of Allah. Engendering the love of Allah. The sabiroon are given their rewards without any reckoning. Some rewards you get it is reckoned already whereas patience is without reckoning. No one was given a blessing better or more than patience.

The ninth one is to actually be happy, glad about what is happening because of these benefits. The Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said that in a hadith that Imam Ahmad relates about the people who went before, they used to be as happy during times of calamities and tribulations as you are during times of abundance. How wonderful those two distasteful things: death and poverty because in the akhirah, poverty in this world is a blessing because your hisab is much less if you are poor. That is what Imam Ali said about wealth “what is halal from it is a reckoning and what is prohibited from it is a punishment” and that is why the zuhad are called, the most intelligent people are the people of zuhad because they give up things because they do not want the problem that go with these things. That they were happy with it not because they happened but rather because of the rewards and the fruits that came from those tribulations.

So just as somebody who is happy who has great diseases when he drinks that bitter cure that will remove that disease, he is drinking it and he is happy about it because he is thinking not about the bitterness and the difficult of the remedy but he is thinking about the benefits that will come from taking the bitter remedy so this is the way people are of Allah with the tribulations.

The tenth is to be grateful for it because of what are contained in there of the benefits as a sick person would be grateful to the doctor who is severing one of his limbs or preventing him from his desires because he believes that is a cure for him. You go to the surgeon, the surgeon cut your hand off because there is gangrene, what do they say to the surgeon afterwards? Thank you so much doctor. He just cut off your hand. Why are you thanking him? Because you realise he was doing you a benefit even though outwardly he harmed you so in the same way those people who have tribulation from Allah know that Allah only does those things to benefit them to make them grow and so they actually say alhamdulillah.

The eleventh one, the purification that these calamities have towards their wrongs and their sins. Allah said that anything that afflicts you is from what your own hands have wrought and He pardons much of what you have done in other words what you are being afflicted with is actually much less than what you deserve and in that, one of the things that Imam Nasafi in his tafsir and his tafsir, it is a beautiful tafsir, one of the things he says in that, he said if you reflect on the meaning of that you will show gratitude for your calamities because you will realise that it is a

blessing that they are much less than what they are, that is the secret of that ayah. That is why Allah followed that up, that you are afflicted with your wrong actions, you can feel bad about that when you realise that He has pardoned so much, it actually makes you feel grateful that Allah has overlooked so much of your shortcomings.

That the believer is not afflicted with any difficulty, exhaustion, fatigue, anxiety that concerns him or even a thorn that punctures him except that Allah removes with it, that he steps on a thorn that he steps on except that Allah removes with it his wrong actions so those are all blessings. So no disease, no exhaustion, fatigue anything like that at all comes as a removal of wrong actions, subhanAllah.

The twelfth blessing is the compassion that Allah enables you to show to people that are in tribulation and to help them. “Whoever relieves a quorba, one of the calamities of this world for a believer, Allah will relieve a calamity for him on the yaum ul qiyammah” so people in tribulation become an opportunity. One of the things that Imam Muhammad al Hasan one of the things that he says in his commentary on the Mudhara, he said there are two conditions that people have:

1. Where you have the afiyah, you have the wellbeing in yourself, in your family but you get problems of other people
2. You have these problems

If you do not help people who have problems then Allah will give you those problems. That is the nature of the world it is to test you. So you are either tested in yourself or with others but you have to respond appropriately so avoiding those things is a danger and that is why the tribulations of others are actually a blessing if they come to you for help or something, it is an opportunity to earn some closeness to Allah.

In the Muwatta of Imam Malik, Isa (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was reported to have said “people are of two types, people of wellbeing and people of tribulation so have compassion for the people of tribulation and show gratitude for well being”. That is why if you are in good shape, do not complain, tell somebody to punch you if you complain or something because you do not want, if you complain and you do not have anything to complain about, Allah will give you things to complain about and then you will think about how good things were. Remember we used to complain about that, what were we thinking? There are people that say that when real calamities hit them they think what was I complaining about before? The truth is well stop complaining now because it could get worse, that is the whole point. It could get worse and one of the poets said

“The only people that really feel sorry for people in passionate love are the people who have been in passionate love”

So when you see people in tribulation you should remember I have been there, I should remember what that was like and show compassion to them.

The thirteenth one. Tribulations give you the blessing of having true knowledge of the extent of blessing of well being so when tribulations come you really appreciate what well being is. So it is better to appreciate it when you have got it. The nature of blessings is that nobody realises the extent of them until they have lost them. That is a human being. He is just oppressive of himself and constantly denying the blessings of Allah.

The fourteenth. What Allah has prepared from the blessings of the reward of the akhirah based on these varying ranks so this is also a blessing that Allah has prepared rewards for the calamities that you bear patiently or with contentment based on different ranks. There are people that are content that will have a higher station in paradise than people that were simply patient and patience is the lowest maqam in the maqamat of the tawbahs actually the first one.

The fifteenth: What is hidden inside in the folds of these calamities are blessings. That is another benefit. Maybe you dislike a thing and Allah will put in it much good. You don't know, there are things hidden in blessings so I will give you an example. I missed a flight once and alhamdulillah I have never been upset about missing a flight I guarantee you because I always think if the plane goes down I am going to feel like such a fool for having run to catch the plane or something like that. So I just relax, never want to be in a plane that you ran to catch and then it goes down. What was I running for? So if you miss it, you miss it. But I missed a plane, they ended up giving me \$500 back because they had to re-route the ticket and things like that and the difference was nothing in time and things like that. There are always benefits that are hidden in what you think is a trouble. The thing about the world is that if you enter into a state with your experience of the world in which whenever these things happen you just accept them you will always find the benefit, you will see them always, Allah will show them, you will know there is a benefit. In every delay there is God's choice in it and that is part of what the mumin does, he submits to it.

The sixteenth one is that tribulations prevent you from arrogance and from evil, pride, tyranny, doing all these things like Nimrud. Had Nimrud been a poor sickly person deaf and dumb he would have never had done all those horrible things that he did. The same with the tyrants of the world, had they been born impoverished and this and that but it is those things that make them arrogant.

The seventeenth one is contentment, *ridha* because tribulations afflict the good and evil and whosoever does not like it then it is just on him and he has lost the *dunya* and the *akhirah* and whoever is pleased with it he is pleased because he knows that paradise is better than anything in this world and if those are the tribulations that it takes to get him into paradise then he is content with it.

So these are some of the blessings I mean there are many blessings but these are the ones that Sultan al Ulema Abdul Aziz Salaam enumerated and they are good to remember in these times.

But I will end by saying read history. These are not bad times. Muslims should not be so negative, there has been much worse times I mean there are aspects that are bad about this time and certainly one of the greatest calamities of the rime is that we do not have a lot of people of knowledge any more and we do not have the levels of *deen* and things like this but just in terms of outward *dunya* calamities, this period is nothing if you read history, this period is nothing.

The real calamities of this age are spiritual calamities, they are not worldly calamities so if we are going to weep over the calamities of this age we should be weeping about the lack of religion, about the lack of spirituality, we should not be weeping about all this stuff we see out there because it is just not that bad. I am sorry and if you think it is you have not read history. Things have been much worse, read about earlier wars and how many people died and plagues that afflicted people, a third of Europe was wiped out by the black plague.

There are too many blessings, the blessings we have overwhelming. That is why *inshaAllah* we will ask Allah to put us in a state of gratitude with Allah and make us from the *shaakireen* really make us from the *shaakirneen* and just not complain. The thing about complainers is that even complainers do not like complainers really. They want to complain but they do not want to listen to anybody who complains. So *insha'Allah* we will stop whining. It is the *maqam* of the *tifil* is to whine. It is what I always tell my boys, nobody likes a whiner even a whiner and they laugh because they know it is true. So whining is a *maqam*, it is the *maqam* of the *tifil*, that is what a whiner is. The *rijaal* in *haqiqah* it does not mean male, the *rujul* is male and female it is the one who has reached the *maqam* of the adult, it is the mature one, that is what it means, the mature one. *Rujula* is maturity.

So *insha'Allah* Allah make us all mature.

Summary of the 17 Benefits of Tribulation

1. You realise the power of Lordship over you
2. You realise your abject servanthood and your complete state of resignation and brokenness before the will and power of Allah
3. Sincerity to Allah
4. You return to Allah and are suddenly fervent in your desire of your Lord
5. It leads to a humbled state before God
6. You are forbearing to the One who has afflicted you.
7. You can actually forgive them
8. To be patient during the tribulation
9. To actually be happy, glad about what is happening because of these benefits
10. To be grateful for it because of what are contained in there of the benefits
11. The purification that these calamities have towards your wrongs and your sins
12. Allah enables you to show to people that are in tribulation and to help them
13. Tribulations give you the blessing of having true knowledge of the extent of blessing
14. What Allah has prepared from the blessings of the reward of the akhirah based on these varying ranks
15. What is hidden inside in the folds of these calamities are blessings
16. Tribulations prevent you from arrogance and from evil, pride, tyranny
17. Contentment

- See more at: <http://sheikhhamza.com/transcript/17-Benefits-of-Tribulation#sthash.hVgpFM7w.dpu>